

The Journal of the VISVABHARATI STUDY CIRCLE

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Senior Basic Training College
Barnipur
6.5.59

Editor :

SANTOSH CHANDRA SENGUPTA

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Santosh Chandra Sengupta

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PRIME MINISTER'S HOUSE
NEW DELHI

November 15, 1958.

Message

I am glad to know that Visva-Bharati is bringing out a journal which will be the organ of the Visva-Bharati Study Circle. I think this is a very good idea and I send my good wishes for it.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

Messages

It gives me great pleasure to learn that the Study Circle of our University is going to publish in printed form some of the papers which were read at its meetings during the last three years. I dare say, they are of more than ephemeral interest. On going through the journal, the members will certainly feel happy to be reminded of many a lively discussion held in the past in which they had themselves taken active part. The volume will certainly help to attract to the Study Circle many who have hitherto chosen to remain aloof. I congratulate the Secretary, Dr. Santosh C. Sengupta, on his great success in managing the affairs of the Study Circle.

Santiniketan

5. 3. 59

Sd/- **K. C. Chaudhuri**

Vice-Chancellor,
Visva-Bharati.

It is only fitting & natural that the teachers of an Institution, dedicated primarily to the training of the mind of man, should themselves take a healthy interest in intellectual matters, & try to disseminate their considered views on various subjects outside the pale of the class-room.

Therefore the Journal of the V. B. Study Circle is a welcome addition not only to the Univ. Library, but let us hope it will also attract the attention of readers beyond the campus.

Santiniketan

6. 3. 59.

Sd/- **Indira Devi Choudhurani**

33, McLeod Street,
Calcutta-16.

I was much excited when, a few years ago, I saw the Visva-Bharati Study Circle begin its career in a modest way. Since then, day by day, it has gained strength and increased in stature : it is now a prominent feature in the intellectual life of Santiniketan. I am glad to know that it is about to bring out its journal which, I hope, will thrive equally well.

November 24, 1958.

Sd/- **Tapanmohan Chatterji**

I am glad to know that the inter-departmental Study Circle which is an academic forum of Visva-Bharati is bringing out a journal. I have no doubt that the journal which is a record of the contributions of the teachers of the University will have an academic interest.

I wish it success.

Santiniketan

Sd/- Kshitimohan Sen

4. 3. 59.

It gives me great pleasure to learn that the organisers of the study-circle are making a useful contribution to the intellectual life of the institution through healthy discussions and discourses which they are conducting periodically. Through this journal the organisers intend to maintain record of these valuable discourses and also make it available to a wider public. I congratulate them and wish them full success in their new venture.

Santiniketan

Sd/- Nandalal Bose

6. 3. 59

Editorial Note

As the journal is an organ of the Visva-Bharati Study Circle a few words about the origin and the development of the study circle will not be out of place. I approached the late Dr. P. C. Bagchi, the then Vice-Chancellor of Visva-Bharati, with the proposal for the formation of an Inter-departmental Study Circle in February '55. He responded very warmly to the proposal and assured me of every possible assistance. I convened a meeting of the teachers of Visva-Bharati in the first week of March '55. The late Dr. Bagchi explained the purpose and the importance of a study circle especially in an academic institution as ours, and a study circle to be called the Inter-departmental Study Circle was formed. It was intended that it should be a medium of communication of the results of studies in different fields of investigation. The study circle which started in a mixed atmosphere of uncertainty and hope gradually developed into an academic forum of Visva-Bharati. The noted features of the development are, broadly speaking, (a) the increasing emphasis on research in the treatment of subjects (b) provision for lectures of scholars from outside Visva-Bharati. According to the present arrangement the study circle meets, on an average, twice a month. Of the two lectures one is given by the visiting scholar.

It was decided at the suggestion of Professor S. N. Bose, the ex-Vice-Chancellor, to keep a record of the lectures in the form of a journal and I was given the charge of editing it. In accordance with the advice of authorities that there should not be a selection from the contributions to the study circle, especially for the first number of the journal. I approached all who read or spoke in the study circle since March '56. The papers which were received within a specified period are published. They are printed in the order they were received.

The journal is in two sections: English and Bengali. The number of the papers in the English section is twelve, and in the Bengali, two. The contributions are on different subjects. The paper on "Existential Literature" is in the form of an abstract of the talk given in the study circle. The articles, "Graham Greene" and "A modern defence of Orthodoxy" are reprinted from the Visva-Bharati Quarterly,

and the paper in Bengali, entitled, "Itihash ki" is reproduced from the Bengali weekly, *Desh*.

I have done my best to avoid errors as far as possible. Perhaps, some printing errors, in spite of my efforts, remain. I can, however, assure the readers that all attempts will be made to overcome the defects of the first number of the journal in the next one. I shall consider my labour more than rewarded if the journal gives the interested public an idea of an aspect of the academic activities of Visva-Bharati.

As the editor I express my sincere thanks to the contributors for their co-operation. I am grateful to the Visva-Bharati authorities for their assistance in the organisation of the study circle and the publication of the journal. I am also thankful to the Acharya and the Upacharya of Visva-Bharati, Smt. Indira Devi Choudhurani, Sri Tapanmohan Chatterji, Sri Kshitimohan Sen and Sri Nandalal Bose for their kind messages. My thanks are also due to the editors of the Visva-Bharati Quarterly and the *Desh* for the permission to reprint.

Santosh C. Sengupta

NOTES ON THE CONTRIBUTORS

TAPANMOHAN CHATTERJI : Called to the Bar at Lincoln's inn but has now given up practice to devote himself entirely to literary pursuits. Has been a member of the Executive Council and Court of Visva-Bharati since its incorporation as a University. Author of *Song Sous Manquiers* (Bossard Paris), *Apple Blossom* and other *Stories* (Macmillan, London), *Palasir Yuddha* or *The Battle of Plassey* (Navana, Calcutta), *Smritiranga* (Navana), *Bangla Lyriker Gorar Katha* or *The Story of Early Lyrics of Bengal* (Visva-Bharati), *Hindu Aine Vibaha* or *Hindu Law of Marriage* (Visva-Bharati).

ROY NORTH M. A. (Oxon) : Formerly Professor of English at Visva-Bharati. At present the Manager of Orient Longmans. Contributed a number of articles to some of the leading journals.

SATYENDRANATH GHOSHAL, M. A. D.phil. : Had been till recently the Reader in Bengali at Visva-Bharati. At present the Reader and the Head of the Department of Bengali of Patna University.

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1650

GITANJALI : THE SONG-OFFERINGS
OF
RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

In 1911, while about to embark for a trip to Europe, Rabindranath fell seriously ill. When he became convalescent, he went for a change of air to his estate at Selaidah in East Bengal, where on the bank of the river Padma, he had spent many of his youthful days. He was still too weak to make concentrated efforts on original writings. Almost playfully he began translating some of his lyrics into English prose merely to pass away time. This was the humble beginning, but the results were far-reaching.

In 1912, Rabindranath was declared fit by his doctors to undertake the voyage to Europe. Within a few days, he sailed for England. On board the ship he added some more translations to the ones he had already made from his Bengali poems and arrived in London with a hundred of them tucked away in a corner of his trunk.

William Rothenstein, the celebrated English artist, had met Rabindranath in Calcutta, and was eagerly waiting to welcome him. The poet and the artist began to live next to each other at Hampstead. One day at Rothenstein's request, Rabindranath, with a good deal of hesitation, brought out and showed him the translations. Rothenstein did not say much, but he invited a number of well-known intellectuals to an evening party at his house. He had also sent out typed copies of these verses to several literary men all over England, one especially to W. B. Yeats. At that gathering Rabindranath read out with much diffidence, some fifty of his poems done into English from their originals in Bengali. He still believed he could not write good English.

The men at the party listened in silence. Their faces remained immobile and inscrutable. They did not utter a single word either in praise or in censure. But from the next morning, Tagore was the talk of the day in all literary circles of London. Who was this Indian who had come to them like a prophet of the olden days, and who wrote such fine English as had not been seen since the English Bible was first written ?—they enquired of one another.

The India Society of London almost at once published in a limited edition, Rabindranath's English *Gitanjali* or Song Offerings with a hundred and three of his best pieces. Yeats had volunteered to sponsor the book and write an introduction for it.

How this slender book of verse excited the imagination of the English literary world can be gathered to some extent, from an extract I am giving below from Yeats's Introduction to *Gitanjali* :

"I have carried the manuscript of these translations about with me for days, reading it in railway trains, or on the top of omnibuses and in restaurants, and I have often had to close it lest some stranger would see how much it moved me. These lyrics—which are in the original, my Indians tell me, full of subtlety of rhythm, of untranslatable delicacies of colour, of metrical invention—display in their thought a world I have dreamed of all my life long. The work of a supreme culture, they yet appear as much the growth of the common soil as the grass and the rushes. A tradition, where poetry and religion are the same thing, has passed through the centuries, gathering from learned and unlearned metaphor and emotion, and carried back again to the multitude the thought of the scholar and of the noble. If the civilization of Bengal remains unbroken, something even of what is most subtle in these verses will have come, in a few generations, to the beggar on the roads. As the generations pass, travellers will hum them on the highway and men rowing upon rivers. A whole people, a whole civilization, immeasurably strange to us, seems to have been taken up into this imagination ; and yet we are not moved because of its strangeness, but because we have met our own image, as though we had walked in Rossetti's willow wood, or heard, perhaps for the first time in literature, our voice as in a dream."

Almost instantaneously with its publication, the English *Gitanjali* electrified the entire English-speaking world. Reviewers with one voice, proclaimed it to be the best book of the year. They were utterly surprised at the simple but deeply profound English prose of Rabindranath, which they themselves had long forgotten, and now they marvelled in wonder at the world of beauty and joy which these prose-poems had revealed to them.

What was the secret of this stupendous success of Rabindranath's poems in English ? The key to the understanding of this lies in the attitude of the mind of Europeans since the Renaissance. Poetry had gradually become to them the means of metrical expression of an emotional experience. They did not, as they had in the Middle Ages,

live in poetry, while Tagore's poetry was the product of the supreme serenity of soul. His poems were not verses, but prayers blooming forth into flowers of songs. They were fruits of his meditation. That is why his songs were offerings. He says :

Ever in my life have I sought thee
with my songs. It was they who led
me from door to door, and with them
have I felt about me, searching and
touching my world.

It was my songs that taught me all
the lessons I ever learnt ; they showed
me secret paths, they brought before
my sight many a star on the horizon of
my heart.

They guided me all the day long to
the mysteries of the country of pleasure
and pain, and, at last, to what palace
gate have they brought me in the
evening at the end of my journey ?

While the Europeans get bewildered by the diversity they perceive in the universe, the Indians find in it a simplicity that is of God's own creation.

Rabindranath has said :

My song has put off her adornments.
She has no pride of dress and decoration.
Ornaments would mar our union;
they would come between thee and
me; their jingling would drown thy
whispers.

My poet's vanity dies in shame before
thy sight. O master poet, I have sat
down at thy feet. Only let me make my life
simple and straight, like a flute
of reed for thee to fill with music.

That teaching is the most intricate which leads to the utter simplicity of the tune—says the poet somewhere else. This simplicity lends a supreme dignity to his language, although it is a foreign tongue to him. Dignity in its turn brings rhythm to his prose, and prose becomes poetry at once. More meaning can be packed into every line of such prose as that prose is free from conscious and laboured attempts at metrification. But the Europeans will never allow their sturdy prose to trespass upon the dewy fields of poetry.

Just see how simple, how dignified, and how rhythmic is the prose of Rabindranath's *Gitanjali*:

Have you not heard his silent steps ?
He comes, comes, ever comes.
Every moment and every age, every
day and every night he comes, comes,
ever comes.

Many a song have I sung in many a
mood of mind, but all their notes have
always proclaimed, "He comes, comes,
ever comes."

In the fragrant days of sunny April
through the forest path he comes,
comes, ever comes.

In the rainy gloom of July nights on
the thundering chariot of clouds he
comes, comes, ever comes.

In sorrow after sorrow it is his steps
that press upon my heart, and it is
the golden touch of his feet that
makes my joy to shine.

And yet this simplicity should not be confounded with austerity. The reaction of the universe on Tagore is indeed sensual. But sensuousness has filtered through a trance which gives it a tinge of white purity of the spirit. His therefore is the joy of the universe which takes him on its wings to ethereal heights, where no evils of the world can touch him.

I have had my invitation to this world's festival, and thus my life has been blessed. My eyes have seen and my ears have heard.

It was my part at this feast to play upon my instrument, and I have done all I could.

Now, I ask, has the time come at last when I may go in and see thy face and offer thee my silent salutation ?

This white purity of the spirit has saved Rabindranath from being a mere aesthete. His trance is not produced by opium-eating but is the result of a genuine sympathy with the world generated by deep meditation. Listen to this :

Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads ! Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple with doors all shut ? Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before thee !

He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the path-maker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and in shower, and his garment is covered with dust. Put off thy holy mantle and even like him come down on the dusty soil !

Deliverance ? Where is this deliverance to be found ? Our master himself has joyfully taken upon him the bonds of creation ; he is bound with us all for ever.

Come out of thy meditations and leave aside thy flowers and incense !

What harm is there if thy clothes
become tattered and stained ? Meet
him and stand by him in toil and in
sweat of thy brow.

After the Renaissance the Europeans dedicated themselves to a life of action. Men of affairs became afraid of yielding themselves to the hypnotic powers of meditation lest their thoughts and actions became suspended under its influence and turned them into weaklings. But they do not know. They do not understand the sustaining power of meditation, and the strength it gives passes all understading.

Yet there are men in Europe who are, at rare moments, visited by visions and get a glimpse of the world of which Yeats dreamed all his life and which Rabindranath suddenly revealed to the Europeans in the very first book he had written in English. But having got an inkling of this new world, these men were again afraid of giving an account of what they had seen and heard : afraid that they might be laughed out of the arena of literature and arts if they had dared give expression to their inmost thought.

Here is an extract from the review of Gitanjali in the Times Literary Supplement supposed to have been written by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, which explains the point.

"In reading these poems one feels, not that they are the curiosities of an alien mind, but that they are prophetic of the poetry that might be written in England, if our poets could attain to the same harmony of emotion and idea. That divorce of religion and philosophy which prevails among us is a sign of our failure in both. We keep our emotions for particular things and cannot carry them into our contemplation of the universe. That chills us and turns our speech to cold scientific jargon, and the jargon affects our very thought, so that from speaking of life as if it were a mechanical process we come to think of it so.....But this Indian poet.....contemplates the universe as a primitive poet might contemplate a pair of lovers, and makes poetry out of it as naturally and simply. As we read his pieces we seem to be reading the psalms of a David of our own time.....Some perhaps will refuse to fall under the spell of this Indian poet because his philosophy is not theirs. If it seems to us fantastic and alien, before we despise it, we should ask ourselves the ques-

tion : What is our philosophy ? We are very restless in thought, but we have none that poets can express."

Yet I do not feel quite sure whether even these men had fully understood Rabindranath and his world. Some thought he was a mystic and his poetry was exotic. Others thought his poetry was not exotic enough to be truly oriental. Some thought he was influenced by Christian thought and ideals and also by English classics, while others plainly declared he was only paying back in caricature what he had borrowed from the English. Some quite brilliant intellectuals, when the first shock of the avalanche of Rabindranath's poetry was over, became frankly abusive. Some naively confessed they did not understand him at all.

But nonetheless, I feel certain that a day will come when Rabindranath will be no longer spiritually a stranger to the Europeans. One day men of the West will realise that life is not all work. Then these men will turn to meditation like the toiler turns to sleep after his day's work is done. And then they will wake up to be compulsively aware of the mystery that surrounds life, and time will then have come for them to enter the inmost shrine of the soul, and there at its altar, offer their silent salutations. Only then the voice of Rabindranath will be heard and understood : for the mind of the West will then have attained its wholeness.

But in the meantime we could do one thing : we can place in the hands of all students of literature a copy of the Song Offerings of Rabindranath as a rare gift of the spirit. I do not know whether the English version of Gitanjali is prescribed as a textbook by any of our universities for students of English literature. In our time it was not so. But there was a reason for it then. The high authorities of the universities were then under the dictates of still higher authorities, who did not understand that the English of Gitanjali is the English of pure spirit and that the gift of pure spirit is an abiding joy for ever.

Tapanmohan Chatterji

(Read before the Study Circle on 13 April 1956)

GRAHAM GREENE

"If a cracked cup is put into boiling water it breaks, and an old dog-toothed civilisation is breaking now," wrote Graham Greene in October, 1940, when describing the bombing of London. The war to Greene, as to George Orwell, was inevitable. In the same essay, *At Home*, he writes :

The curious waste lands one sometimes saw from trains—the crated ground round Wolverhampton under a cindery sky with a few cottages grouped round like slums among the rubbish : those acres of abandoned cars round Slough : the dingy fortune-teller's on the first floor above the cheap permanent waves in a Brighton backstreet ; they all demanded violence, like the rooms in a dream where one knows that something presently will happen—a door fly open or a window give and let the end in.

This demand for violence was inherent in Greene's writing of the 1930's. He portrayed the world as something diseased and erratic. "How could a world like this end in anything but war ?" he exclaims at the end of *The Lawless Roads* (1939). In Mexico, which he calls the land of "a cruel anarchic adolescence," and where there are "sudden inexplicable outbursts of brutality," he came to this view : "It's typical of Mexico, of the whole human race perhaps—violence in favour of an ideal and the ideal lost and the violence just going on."

In *The Lawless Roads* Greene "dreamed that a woman and I had committed a murder and buried the body, but the smell seeped up to us and through the ground until the whole world seemed to carry the scent of decay." It is this "scent of decay" that Greene describes : even the teeth of his characters, like those of Thomas Mann, are carious. He takes us below the superficialities of the gadget civilisation, away from the shiny sticks of rock, the slot-machines, down to the sewers beneath.

The decay shows itself in the economic insecurity, the social distress, injustice. It shows itself in the falling away of reliable standards—"a rubbish heap stinking under the sanitary notice forbidding it" (*The Lawless Roads*)—in the sense of frustration and constriction, the self-delusion, the soured spirituality, the futility.

The world, in Green's books, is like a prison. In *It's a Battlefield* (1934) the chief warder explains how his prison is organised into Block A for the new prisoners, Block B for those who behave themselves, Block C for the best behaved who have special privileges—"as many library books as they want. And they have more butter on their bread." A few pages later the manager describes his factory in similar terms. The new employees are in Block A and as they improve they go to Block B and finally to Block C where they have special privileges—"a quarter of an hour longer at lunch-time. The use of the concert room."

In *The Power and the Glory* (1940) the hunted priest has to spend a night in a filthy Mexican jail but discovers that life there is not so very different from the world outside. "This place was very like the world elsewhere: people snatched at causes of pleasure and pride in cramped and disagreeable surroundings. There was no time to do anything worth doing, and always one dreamed of escape."

But, in these pre-war novels, escape can come only through violence. D. in *The Confidential Agent* (1939) recognises the futility of present-day life and wonders if, after all, the barbarism of his own country is not better. At any rate, it may lead to something better.

It was worth killing a civilisation to prevent the government of human beings from falling into the hands of—he supposed they were called the civilised. What sort of a world would that be? A world full of preserved objects labelled 'Not to be touched'; no religious faith but a lot of Gregorian chants and picturesque ceremonies. Miraculous images which bled or wagged their heads on certain days would be praised for their quaintness; superstition was interesting. There would be excellent libraries, but no new books. He preferred the distrust, the barbarity, the betrayals, even chaos.

War, at any rate, brought you back to simplicity. You were jerked back to fundamentals and the futile complications of modern life were abruptly discarded. So, after all the violence, perhaps the

human race will get back the simplicity which, Greene thinks, it once had. For Greene's approval is reserved for the pre-civilised world. Abyssinia, he wrote in *The Spectator* in 1935, is "dirty but perhaps more worth preserving than the bright, slick streamlined civilisation which threatens it."

Somewhere, Greene believes, the world went off the rails. If you go back far enough, he thinks, you can find natural goodness and people who are not perverted. In *Journey without Maps* (1936) he declares: "When one sees to what unhappiness, to what peril of extinction centuries of cerebration have brought us, one sometimes has a curiosity to discover if one can find out from what we have come, to recall at which point we went astray."

In this book he describes his visit to one of the most primitive parts of the world, the interior of Liberia. Distrusting "any future based on what we are" he is willing to suffer much discomfort for the chance of finding "one's place in time based on a knowledge not only of one's present but of the past from which one has emerged."

Turning from civilisation, "from Major Grant and Miss Kilrane, from the peace under the down and the flat off the Strand, from the holy and depraved individualists, to the old, the unfamiliar, the communal life beyond the clearing," Greene found that "the real native was someone to love and admire.....One didn't have to condescend; one knew more about some things, but they knew more about others. And on the whole the things they knew were more important."

He wishes the world could get back this simplicity, which gives him "a sensation of having come home, for here one was finding associations with a personal and racial childhood, one was being scared by the same old witches." He exclaims regretfully, "If we could get back to this bareness, simplicity, instinctive friendliness, feeling rather than thought, and start again."

We must get away, he pleads, from this waste land of the civilised, where the inhabitants are either futile or evil, away from the sordid acquisitiveness, from the fake smartness and gaiety, the mouldy corruption, the bright vulgarity. It is, he says in *The Lawless Roads*, a world in which "cynicism, a distrust of men's motives, is the accepted ideology."

The progress from the primitive to the civilised he views as

a progress from the child to the adolescent. And adolescence is so often a time of appalling selfishness. The journey into Liberia had for Greene "reinforced a sense of disappointment with what man had made out of the primitive, what he had made out of his childhood." Back at the Liberian Coast he declares :

We were all of us back in the hands of adolescence, and I thought rebelliously : I'm glad, for here is iced beer and a wireless set which will pick up the Empire programme from Daventry, and after all it is home in the sense that we have been taught to know home, where we will soon forget the finer taste, the finer pleasure, the finer terror, on which we might have built.

Yet the picture Greene paints of modern civilisation is a very one-sided one. Many of his criticisms are true but they do not represent the whole truth. He takes extreme cases to illustrate his point of view—the lechery of Major Grant, the 'tarts' in Bond Street—these people are only a part of civilisation, but from the picture Greene gives one would think they represented it. Civilisation does contain violence, perversion, appalling selfishness, but it does not consist only of these things.

In any case, it is impossible to go back. In his yearning for primitive simplicity Greene is extremely negative. One should never retreat when facing a problem, but grapple with it. Greene even admits,

The 'noble savage' no longer exists ; perhaps he never existed, though in the very young (among the few who are not disfigured by navel hernia) you seem to see behind the present to something lovely, happy and unenslaved, something like the girl who came up the hill that morning, a piece of bright cloth twisted about her hips, the sunlight falling between the palms on her dark, hanging breasts, her great silver anklets, the yellow pot she carried on her head.

It is a nostalgic, beautiful picture. But we cannot get back to that, just as it is impossible, indeed undesirable, for a grown-up to become a child again. What is innocence in a child becomes naiveté in a grown-up. In any case, the primitive life and certainly the life of a child is by no means uncomplicated. As Fowler says

to Pyle in *The Quiet American* (1955) : "Find me an uncomplicated child, Pyle. When we are young we are a jungle of complications. We simplify as we get older."

But although Greene's prescriptions—in his early works he recommends a return to simplicity through violence, in his later books the Catholic religion—are not necessarily satisfactory, he can certainly diagnose the ills. He limits himself strictly to the portrayal of these ills ; he does not acknowledge the good aspects of civilisation, the discoveries of medicine, for instance. But, within these limitations, he describes the sufferings of civilisation with tremendous force.

It is a neurotic disease that civilisation suffers from. "The new paganism of the West," he writes in *Journey without Maps*, "which prides itself on being scientific, is often peculiarly neurotic." Modern man, to Greene, is a frustrated creature, with rasped nerves and an inability to enjoy himself without self-consciousness.

Over civilisation, like a smelly blanket, lies the heavy sickness of seediness. Describing K. in *The Confidential Agent* Greene writes "his old seedy overcoat registered sickness like a cat's fur." The picture Greene gives of pre-war England is one of unrelieved depression with seedy, down-at-heel characters struggling bitterly for survival and with sex represented as a functional act to relieve gloom. Civilisation is on edge, running down. Behind the shows lies sordiness, behind the sordiness lie negativeness and anarchy. Of Anthony Farrant in *England Made Me* (1935) it is said : "Behind the bright bonhomie of his glance, behind the firm hand-clasp and the easy joke, lay a deep nihilism."

The characters, in the main, are neither great nor noble ; they are simply seedy adventurers, flashy, petty individuals finding an outlet in cadging, in women, in crime. Anthony Farrant, who had "the bold approach, the shallow cheer of an advertisement," is typical :

The grit of London lay under his eyes, he was at home in this swirl of smoke and steam at the marble-topped tables, chaffing in front of the beer-handles, he was at home in the one-night hotels, in the basement offices, among the small crooked flotations of transient business, jovial among the share-pushers.

As Kate thinks in *England Made Me*, people are "conditioned by

their insecurity." They are victims of their environment and are not strong enough to rise above it. "They hadn't the resources to hold their place, but the world had so conditioned them that they hadn't the vigour to resist." Life for these people is a "journey without maps" and, like Orwell's characters, they are warped by the pressure of their surroundings. In West Africa in *The Heart of the Matter* (1948) : "Here intonations changed in the course of a few months : became high-pitched and insincere or flat or guarded."

Survival is the primary struggle. Anthony Farrant is "like a native campaigner accustomed to travel vast distances with the lightest food ; one didn't starve, one didn't die, in the kind of war he fought, survival was the greatest victory." Elizabeth in *The Man Within* (1929) remarks to Andrewes : "You are so afraid of death." He replies : "I'm afraid of extinction...I am all that I have ; I am afraid of losing that."

To survive in an environment to which they cannot adjust means that they must achieve some power, even if it consists only in inflicting pain and humiliation. To torment other creatures may, they feel, provide a relief for their own frustration. Minty, in *England Made Me*, himself a piece of "the refuse of a changing world," torments the spider under the glass as he, like Caliban in Browning's *Caliban upon Setebos*, feels that God torments him.

Self-expression and self-justification are urges that have to be satisfied. Andrewes in *The Man Within*, humiliated and embittered by the taunts of the smugglers that he will never be the man his father was, justifies himself by betraying them : "I've shown them that I'm of importance now."

But always there is the humiliation. To Pinkie with his "hideous and unnatural pride", in *Brighton Rock*, "nothing must lay him open to the mockery of people more experienced than he." To Minty : "Pain was an easy thing to bear beside the humiliation which rose with one in the morning and lay down with one at night."

Like Shakespeare, Greene often presents two strikingly contrasting types illustrating contrasting moods ; warmth versus coldness, passion versus calculation. We have, for instance, fat sensual characters ; sometimes good, like the big-hearted, pub-haunting Ida with her beery laugh in *Brighton Rock*, sometimes bad, like the unpleasant, slug-like Cholmondeley in *A Gun for Sale* (1936). Then we have the bitter bony ones, in revolt against, the present state of things : Pinkie in *Brighton Rock*., Raven in *A Gun for Sale*, the lieutenant in *The Power and the Glory*.

It is these bony types who are the most dangerous and who turn to violence for a release from their emotional frustration. Their feelings are knitted into their environment but somehow they must tear the fabric apart. "This was the greatest happiness of all ; to feel that restraint was no longer necessary." (*Journey without Maps*). Crime is a means of self-justification ; it gives them power and provides them with the deep and satisfying release for which they crave. Possessing an immense and defensive pride they assert themselves through violence.

"A sense of evil religious in its intensity," Greene ascribes to Henry James but this is a quality he possesses more powerfully himself. He records evil with a passionate urgency. It is an adolescent evil, the product of a world that has never grown up, where in fact adolescence has become perverted and rotten. In *The Third Man* (1949) he remarks : "Evil was like Peter Pan—it carried with it the horrifying and horrible gift of eternal youth."

Evil is a positive force yeasting up life. Greene first met it, he tells us in *The Lawless Roads*, at school where he noticed how "appalling cruelties could be practised without a second thought." In *Journey without Maps* he tells how, "like a revelation, when I was fourteen, I realized the pleasure of cruelty."

Many, according to Greene, never grow out of that realization. "Human nature," he writes in *The Lost Childhood* (1951) "is not black and white but black and grey." We live in a world full of "little store-house of cruelty," a world where "human kindness withers out like a flower in a vacuum flask."

The devils of primitive people and the witches of our childhood are not, he says in *Journey without Maps*, concerned with good or evil. "They terrified us with their power, but one knew all the time that we must not escape them. They simply demanded recognition ; flight was a weakness." But in the modern world, in the frustration and muddle of adolescence, power and evil combine. Power comes through evil and evil demands more than recognition ; it demands submission.

So Greene sees the world as a perpetuation of school-life. It seems the Greene's schooldays (at his father's school at Berkhamsted) must have been exceedingly unpleasant, or else he chooses only to remember the unpleasant aspects. Adolescence, surely, although often a period of great muddle, is not necessarily cruel. Once again, Greene limits himself only to the worst aspects of his subject and exaggerates the unpleasant features. To him, the world has all the adolescent cruelty and heart-

lessness he found at school ; the lack of privacy, "no solitude anywhere at any time," the callous indifference of schoolboys to feelings that do not conform to the general code. Minty's beloved pictures are destroyed by his rowdy schoolmates.

Life is full of betrayals and frequently the betrayal is done unwittingly as in *The Basement Room* (1936). "How much treachery is always nourished in the little overworked centres of somebody else's idealism," Greene remarks in *The Confidential Agent*. Nothing is clear-cut and one gets involved without knowing it. "The fact is a man isn't presented suddenly with two courses to follow, one good and one bad. He gets caught up."

"The one person you trusted was yourself," says D. but even Self lets you down. "If someone believed in me," thinks Andrews in *The Man Within*, "but he did not believe in himself. Always while one part of him spoke, another part stood on one side and wondered, 'Is this I who am speaking ? Can I really exist like this ?' "

Life consists of evasion, in which a person does not dare to face up to reality and clings for protection to illusions, even convincing himself that the illusions are real. In *The Heart of The Matter* : 'Life always repeated the same pattern : there was always sooner or later, bad news that had to be uttered, pink gins that had to be consumed to keep misery away."

Self-delusion is, to Greene, one of humanity's great vices. Man is totally unable to understand himself. He is deluded by his own feelings, by pity, by good intentions, by earnestness. Earnestness is frequently a mask for egotism. In *The Quiet American*, Alden Pyle with his lime-juice and Vit-Health sandwiches, his "enormous respect for what he called serious writers," is described by Fowler in the words : "I never knew a man who had better motives for all the trouble he caused."

Because of evil, weakness, misplaced intentions, transitory illusions, human relationships are bound to fail. Then one is conscious only of a terrifying remoteness, of 'all the immeasurable distance between two human minds." (*The Lawless Roads*). In *The Quiet American* Fowler thinks : "Wouldn't we all do better not trying to understand, accepting the fact that no human being will ever understand another, not a wife a husband, a lover a mistress, nor a parent a child ? Perhaps that's why men have invented God—a being capable of understanding."

Some try to exploit their loneliness as a means of defence. Anthony, and Minty, weak and feeble, shifty and cunning, do their best to evade responsibility. "Responsibility was like an unlucky ring you preferred to hand on to strangers." Blame some external thing for your failure ; the climate, alcohol, women. Never blame yourself, for to blame yourself is to recognise yourself for what you are.

Josef Gruner, in *Stamboul Train*, ruthlessly disciplining himself for the act of crime, is confused by personal feeling. "It was only personal relationships that confused him ; when there was danger, or the need of action. his mind had the reliability of a tested and oiled machine." Pinkie in *Brighton Rock* "held intimacy back as long as he could at the edge of a razor blade."

Fowler, in *The Quiet American*, never wants to get involved. "The human condition being what it was, let them fight, let them love, let them murder, I would not be involved." But he finds that complete isolation does not work. Heng tells him : "Sooner or latter one has to take sides. If one is to remain human." D. says to Rose Cullen in *The Confidential Agent* : You've got to choose some line of action and live by it. Otherwise nothing matters at all. You probably end in a gas oven."

Some characters, good but colourless, aridly try to find fulfilment in the acceptance of responsibility, such as the Assistant Commissioner in *It's a Battlefield* : "the more one was alone the more one clung to one's job, the only thing it was certainly right to do, the only human value valid for every change of government, for every change of heart."

But the Assistant Commissioner sometimes dreams of an "organisation he could serve for higher reasons than pay" and is envious at the thought of younger men who "might live to serve something which they believed worthy of their service."

Frequently one's job is the only thing that keeps one going, especially in times of emotional stress or danger. As Greene remarks in *The Quiet American* : "Ordinary life goes on—that has saved many a man's reason. Just as in an air-raid it proved impossible to be frightened all the time, so under the bombardment of routine jobs, of chance encounters, of impersonal anxieties, one lost for hours together the personal fear."

The external behaviour of Greene's characters is a projection of their inner conflict. Unable to adjust to their environment, buffeted about, they seek some external point of reference, something outside

themselves to which they can cling. There is a longing for the permanent. Fowler writes : "From childhood I had never believed in permanence, and yet I had longed for it. Always I was afraid of losing happiness." Death, to Fowler, was the only permanent thing and therefore "the only absolute value in my world. Lose life and one would lose nothing again for ever." But man must have some belief in permanence, something beyond himself. In *The Lawless Roads* Greene writes : "People must have something outside the narrow world to live for—whether it's the idea of the inevitable progress of the proletarian revolution or just that a black cat will bring them luck if it crosses their path."

But man's emotional relationships are always unsatisfying. The pursuit theme in Greene expresses man's loneliness. His main characters are usually fugitives ; from their fellows, from themselves, from God. D. thinks : "The dead are to be envied. It was the living who had to suffer from loneliness and distrust."

Always there is the loneliness. To Jules in *England Made Me* : "Loneliness was only too easily attained ; it was in the air one breathed ; open any door, it opened on to loneliness in the passage ; close the door at night, one shut loneliness in." Arthur Rowe in *The Ministry of Fear* (1943) is "like a man camping in the desert." Rose in *The Living Room* (1953) exclaims : "I wish to God I didn't feel so lonely." Fowler in *The Quiet American* needs Phuong not necessarily because he loves her but because "I just don't want to be alone in my last decade, that's all."

But woman provides no solution. Indeed, Greene generally portrays woman very unfavourably. She is shown, in the main, as a creature easy to sleep with. She might, in German army slang, be aptly described as *eine Lockerhose*. In *Stamboul Train* Greene remarks cynically : "Novelists like Ruby M. Ayres might say that chastity was worth more than rubies, but the truth was that it was priced at a fur-coat or thereabouts." In *The End of the Affair* (1951), Bendrix writes : "If two people loved they slept together : it was a mathematical formula tested and proved by human experience." In Greene's books, however, they sleep together whether they love each other or not.

But sex, in Greene's books, brings no real satisfaction ; only brief physical pleasure. Lord Chesterfield's remark about sex might well be applied to the sex episodes in Greene's novels : "The pleasure is momentary, the position is ridiculous, and the expense is damnable."

Sex, in a Greene novel, is like sex in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* or *All's Well that Ends Well*; something of "sick desires." The "stupid posture of passion," he describes it in *England made Me*, regarding it with repulsion and, at the same time, fascination. He describes it usually only in its sordid aspects; a hasty union in a train, in a dingy bed-sitting room, in a Nissen hut. Sex, to Greene, is simply "a short barbarous enjoyment in the stubble." (*Stamboul Train*). There is no genuine satisfaction; no real release of human love.

Love, indeed, is barren and disillusioning. In *The Heart of the Matter* Greene says: "In human love there is never such a thing as victory: only a few minor tactical successes before the final defeat of death and indifference." Sara in *The End of the Affair*, declares pathetically, "I want ordinary corrupt human love." But, to Greene, human love by its very nature is always unsatisfying. It inevitably brings pain. In *The Quiet American*, Fowler thinks: "If only it were possible to love without injury—fidelity isn't enough. I had been faithful to Anne and yet I had injured her. The hurt is in the act of possession: we are too small in mind and body to possess another person without pride or to be possessed without humiliation."

Human love is so often the garb in which other emotions disguise themselves. It is easy to confuse love with pity or with a feeling of responsibility. In *The Power and the Glory* the priest "was aware of an immense load of responsibility: it was indistinguishable from love." Love is the great pretender. In reality it may merely be physical attraction or it may be vanity. "To be in love," thinks Fowler, "is to see yourself as someone else sees you, it is to be in love with the falsified and exalted image of yourself."

You are flattered because another person needs you, you marry and then you discover there is really no love at all; merely a need to be protected on the one hand and a sense of pity and responsibility on the other, and both of you have to settle down to "being kind to each other for a life-time," (*The End of the Affair*). Scobie, in *The Heart of the Matter*, feels that "it had always been his responsibility to maintain happiness in those he loved." With his wife he found that "the less he needed Louise the more conscious he became of his responsibility for her happiness."

Pity, to Greene, is one of life's most powerful forces. He says in *The Ministry of Fear*: "Pity is the worst passion of all: we don't outlive it like sex." Pity can lead a man to murder, as in *The Ministry of*

Fear, or to suicide, as in *The Heart of the Matter*. Scobie is damned by his pity, his virtues destroy him. "Pity smouldered like decay at his heart." It engenders and fosters the feeling of responsibility and in Scobie's integrity pity blasts an enormous breach.

In *The Power and the Glory* is the comment. •

When you visualised a man or a woman carefully you could always begin to feel pity...that was a quality which God's image carried with it...when you saw the lines at the corner of the eyes, the shape of the mouth, how the hair grew, it was impossible to hate. Hate was just a failure of the imagination.

For many of Greene's characters, Raven in *A Gun for Sale*, Rose in *Brighton Rock*, Rowe in *The Ministry of Fear* one feels this compassion.

Pity arises in the attractiveness of the unattractive. Scobie, who is bound to his wife by "the pathos of her unattractiveness," had "no sense of responsibility towards the beautiful and the graceful and the intelligent. They would find their own way. It was the face for which nobody would go out of his way, the face that would ever catch the covert look; the face which would soon be used to rebuffs and indifference, that demanded his allegiance."

It is pity rather than love which, in Greene's books, draws people to each other. Sara in *The End of the Affair*, "could always be snared by pity." Rowe in *The Ministry of Fear* was moved by "that sense of pity which is so much more promiscuous than lust."

This theme of pity first shows itself prominently in *The Confidential Agent* (1939) and is developed in later books. Broadly speaking, in the earlier books violence and suffering come directly through evil or through betrayal, but in the later works they are the direct result of people trying to do good.

In the earlier works of the 30's, the decay of civilisation, the sense of evil, and the desire for self-assertion, are the main themes. In *Brighton Rock*, Pinkie "felt no pity at all, he wasn't old enough for pity." He may at times appear pathetic as when "his heart weakened with a faint nostalgia for the tiny dark confessional box, the priest's voice, and the people waiting under the statue, before the bright lights burning down in the pink glasses, to be made safe from eternal pain." But he, in the merciless egotism of adolescence, feels no pity. A sense of pity comes, in Greene's books, only with

maturity. The main characters of the later works, the Priest, Rowe, Scobie, are older men.

Scobie lays down not only his life but also his soul for his friends. The two candidates for his compassion are his wife with her "melancholy, dissatisfaction and disappointment," and his mistress, a young girl, the victim of a troped ship, who has lost her husband and her will to live. To save her Scobie becomes first her friend and then her lover. "What they had thought was safety proved to have been a camouflage of the enemy who works in terms of friendship, trust and pity." But Scobie finds his mistress even more exacting than his wife. The more he concedes the more is required, what is given as a favour is demanded as a right, until he knows that only his death can free them of their need.

If a man is religious, this passion of pity places him in a grave predicament. For Greene's books deal not only with man in relation to society and to himself but, fundamentally, with his relation to God. That is why human love is never described as satisfying. It is bound to be inadequate. That is why, too, the world is presented as sordid and unrewarding. In this respect, Greene's religious sense is so strong that it blinds him to the good aspects of human life. The world is far from being as gloomy as he suggests and human relationships are not such failures. For Greene, the exception becomes the typical. He works by intense contrasts, deliberately making the world appear as black as possible so that it may be contrasted with the love and goodness of God which to him provide the only permanent security.

His books, like Francois Mauriac's, deal fundamentally with moral problems. Behind the social comment lies the moral implication. Issues are posed like : What are the religious implications of an adulterous love-affair ? Does the end justify the means ? Can one sin in a good cause ? Scobie's lapses, his professional indiscretions, his infidelity, his communion while in a state of mortal sin, are due to his heart getting the better of his head. His sense of responsibility overcomes his sense of rectitude.

So the final success or failure of Greene's characters is due to their spiritual strength or weakness. There is Scobie with "virtue, the good life, tempting him in the dark like a sin." But the virtuous life Scobie can only achieve by repudiating his responsibility. The two women, he believes, need him and he must face the

problems thrust upon by his own tenderness. Such responsibility means lying and sinning. Is this to be done at the expense of his soul? Scobie thinks: "One should look after one's own soul at whatever cost to another, and that's what I can't do, what I shall never be able to do."

The problem, caused by his own goodness, brings Scobie to despair, a failing to which only the good are liable. "Only the man of good will carries in his heart the capacity for damnation." In *The Living Room*, James says of Rose to Michael: "You loved her because she was capable of despair."

God in all cases wins but in mysterious ways. The priest says to the girl in *Brighton Rock* about the death of Pinkie: "You can't conceive my child, nor can I nor anyone—the appalling strangeness of the mercy of God." Father Rank says of Scobie: "It may seem an odd thing to say—when a man's as wrong as he was—but I think from what I saw of him that he really loved God."

In *The End of Affair*, passion struggles with faith. Sara, who writes, "I have caught belief like a disease," is drawn to God against her will. It is a conversion like that described in *The Book of Jeremiah*, Ch. 20 vv. 7-10: "Thou hast beguiled me, O Jehovah; and I let myself be beguiled; for Thou art stronger than I and hast prevailed."

The world is evil but in it there are unexpected touches of God's goodness. Even the characters dedicated to ruthlessness sometimes reveal tenderer traits. Ravan, with his hare-lip ("like a badge of class. It revealed the poverty of parents who couldn't afford a clever surgeon,") warped by his upbringing, moves our pity. In *The Power and the Glory* the lieutenant gives the disguised priest money and the priest exclaims in surprise, "You are a good man."

A similar remark is made, incidentally, in Francois Mauriac's *Le Noeud de Vipères*. This is probably coincidental but shows, at any rate, that Greene and Mauriac think along similar lines. The old man saves the Abbé Ardouin from having to reveal an embarrassing incident which had taken place at the seminary:

Comme je lui répondais qu'à mon avis rien ne l'obligeait à nous avertir d'un incident qui concernait la discipline du séminaire, il me prit la main et me dit ces paroles inouïes, que j'entendais pour la première fois de ma vie et qui me causèrent une sorte de stupeur :

—Vous êtes très bon.

One of Greene's major themes then, is the transcending power of God. A character can survive only in relation to something outside himself which will transcend self. Other things of the world,—a woman, a career, money, crime,—all are inadequate. One has finally to surrender to the God who pursues.

This transcending power, in *The Power and the Glory*, thrusts martyrdom upon a mean and petty whisky-priest and gives him heroism against his will. That which raises Scobie's problem above the level of a sordid domestic affair is his religious belief. If he had had no religion the whole affair would have been merely petty and suicide would have been pointless. But he is a Catholic and believes in Hell.

Yet the theme is not damnation but the salvation of very unpromising material. The priest in *The Power and the Glory* is to be considered not for what he is but for what he represents. When the characters are considered in relation to God then they are not just shabby and seedy. In *The Ministry of Fear* Greene writes :

But, of course, if you believed in God—and the Devil—the thing wasn't quite so comic—because the Devil—and God, too,—had always used comic people, futile suburban natures and the maimed and the warped to serve his purposes. When God used them you talked emptily of nobility and when the Devil used them of wickedness, but the material was only dull, shabby human mediocrity in either case.

Greene describes how he became a Catholic in *Journey without Maps*. He tells how "in Nottingham I was instructed in Catholicism, travelling here and there by train into new country with the fat priest who had been an actor...I was baptized one foggy afternoon about four o'clock." Later he says, "I find that intellectually I can accept the fact that to miss a Mass on Sunday is to be guilty of mortal sin."

Many of Greene's readers, of course, do not accept this fact and this may, in some cases, limit the full appreciation of his stories. Certainly it does in *The End of the Affair* where Greene sacrifices his art to his religion.

Nevertheless, even to a non-Catholic, the story of *The Heart of the Matter* is still moving and convincing. Man's relation to Destiny is a universal theme. Greene's books are made convincing through his concern for the significance of the real values of life. Everyone has to face this problem of the relationship of man to his

Creator. Greene has brought to the English Novel a metaphysical dimension that is integrated into the themes of his books in a positive way and is not just a vague conventional background. In an essay on Francois Mauriac he says : "With the death of James the religious sense was lost to the English Novel and with the religious sense went the sense of the importance of the human act." Greene has brought back to the English Novel this religious sense and, what is more, presents it more effectively than James.

Of Henry James, Greene comments : "There is no possibility of a happy ending. This is surely what James tells us, not with the despairing larger-than-life gesture of the romantic novelist but with a kind of bitter precision." Greene, too, again more powerfully than James, writes with a "bitter precision." He makes his stories convincing and moving because of his careful sense of order, his extremely skilful craftsmanship, and his style in which, as Sara says of Bendrix's writing, "you can hear the nerves twitch through the sentences."

In *Stamboul Train* he gives us an idea of his method :

Take an expression in the present, a line of ill-health, a tone of voice, a gesture, no more illuminating to the average unobservant person than the lines and circles in the Baedeker, and fit them to what one knew of the man's surroundings, his friends and furniture, the home he lived in, and one saw the future, his shabby, waiting fate.

This revelation of profundity through trivialities is a technique that is powerfully used by Greene. He says of the Priest in *The Power and the Glory* : "One of his eyelids began to twitch, up and down, up and down : in such trivial ways the body expresses anxiety, horror or despair." Mexico City is "an unhappy city, but you don't discover that at first. You notice only that your tap doesn't run when you go to bed at night."

He records the trivial detail that jerks a scene into vivid life, like lightning revealing a tree against a background of angry sky. In *The Power and the Glory*, when the lieutenant and his men, looking for the priest, come to a village, there is the soldier tripping over his puttee and falling on his rifle, the lieutenant opening his cigarette case, hesitating, and putting it back again. We remember times of suspense by such trivialities.

By his startling use of imagery Greene makes us *feel* the scene. Abstractions are physically expressed, reality is grappled with and particularised. He makes powerful use of the comment image; an image which not only describes but directly creates atmosphere. His prose is full of these comment metaphors, frequently grotesque, which shock the reader into attention and burn in the loneliness, horror, evil, or disgust. In *The Power and the Glory* he describes the rain with the image, "It came perpendicularly down with a sort of measured intensity, as if it were driving nails into a coffin lid." The Mexican guide wore "gym shoes through which one big toe showed—plump and yellow like something which lives underground."

Frequently his images cluster themselves into threes, creating a triadic succession of rapid shots, "The risks he had faced before required only the ducked head, the quick finger, the plain lie." (*Stamboul Train*). "He stared at the mean street, the dustbins along the pavement, the vast shadow of the viaduct." (*Brighton Rock*). This device, however, is used too often in the early books and becomes too mechanical so that on nearly every page the reader waits for the inevitable three clicks.

According to Ezra Pound, literature is "language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree." This is certainly true of Greene's works in which every character and event is charged with overtones of meaning. The sentences have many levels of significance and each episode is related to the whole. In *The Power and the Glory*, for instance, a storm plays its part in intensifying the theme:

The lightning shot down over the harbour and the thunder beat on the roof. This was the atmosphere of the whole state—the storm outside and the talk just going on—words like 'mystery' and 'soul' and the 'source of life' came in over and over again, as they sat on the bed talking, with nothing to do and nothing to believe and nowhere to go.

His style has a disciplined starkness and tenseness which reminds us of Swift. It is a snow-capped volcano. Deliberately avoiding the direct expression of emotion it moves the reader deeply by its devastating casualness. Greene is one of the great masters of irony. His books are deftly built up by a series of sharp and startling ironic twists.

He says in *The Power and the Glory*: "You only had to turn up the underside of any situation and out come scuttling these small

absurd, contradictory situations." It is the underside of the situation in which Greene is interested and underneath there is always the contradiction, the ironic contrast. A Greene book is knitted together with stitches of irony. There is the irony of illusion, of self-deception, the confusing of appearances with realities, life's tragedy of errors.

Like Swift, he has a satirical sense of humour. One of his best pieces of satire is his essay on Beverley Nichols, entitled *Portrait of a Maiden Lady*. His work is dotted with needle-thrusts, as in *Stamboul Train*: "The party, he guessed from its appearance of harassed culture, belonged to the slip-coach for Athens." In *A Gun for Sale* there is the man who was "taking his failure noisily, as a good sportsman should." In *Journey without Maps* he notes: "Where an English map is content to leave a blank space, the American in large letters fills it with the word 'cannibals.'"

About the Americans, especially the American in Asia, he is devastatingly ironic and often unkind. In *The Quiet American* there are the two young American girls "eating their ice-cream with concentration as though they were making an experiment in the college laboratory." There is Joe, the Economic Attaché, "an eternal elder brother who didn't understand", looking "like a face on television" and with "his great warm welcoming smile, full of confidence, like the man who keeps his friends because he uses the right deodorants." There is Alden Pyle with his complacent confidence in his own good intentions. Fowler writes:

Is confidence based on a rate of exchange? We used to speak of sterling qualities. Have we got to talk now about a dollar love? A dollar love, of course, would include marriage and Junior and Mother's Day, even though later it might include Reno or the Virgin Islands or wherever they go nowadays for their divorcees.

The Quiet American, with its setting in Indo-China, does not emphasise the religious theme which was right in the foreground of works like *The Power and the Glory*, *The Heart of the Matter*, and *The End of the Affair*. The chief theme in *The Quiet American* is the appalling harm that can come from the ignorant application of good intentions. Pyle, like most over-earnest people, is "impregably armoured by his good intentions and his ignorance." Beware, says this book, of the man who means well, especially if he has money.

The adolescence theme is still there; Pyle has all the earnestness

of immaturity and, in Fowler's words, he "comes blundering in and people have to die for his mistakes." A bomb explosion, planted through Pylon's influence in order to help create an American-sponsored Third Force, and intended for the assassination of some colonels, instead, by mistake, kills about fifty women and children, whom Pylon later describes as having died for the cause of Democracy. At the scene of the explosion, where Pylon remarks that he must get the blood cleaned off his shoes before he sees the Minister, Fowler looks at him in disgust and thinks: "What's the good? he'll always be innocent, you can't blame the innocent, they are always guiltless. All you can do is to control them or eliminate them. Innocence is a kind of insanity."

This theme of the deceptiveness of innocence is also to be found in *The Heart of the Matter*: "Innocence must die young if it isn't to kill the souls of men." Innocence, to Fowler in *The Quiet American*, is not something to protect; it is something to be protected against. "Innocence always calls mutely for protection, when we would be so much wiser to guard ourselves against it; innocence is like a dumb leper who has lost his bell, wandering the world meaning no harm."

Again, in this book, Greene deliberately limits himself. This gives his work intensity but, at the same time, it leaves a lot unsaid. Happily, most Americans are very different from Pylon and Joe. Once again, Greene gives the impression of generalising too much from the particular.

Nevertheless, whatever effect his work has upon us, sometimes corroborating, sometimes exasperating, sometimes nauseating, we cannot deny its terrific impact. His work rushes at us with tremendous force, tearing up old ideals, breaking up ossified opinions, and showing the enormous and terrifying potentialities of human nature. We are forced to take stock of ourselves anew, to question our standard of values, and that is always a healthy experience. "You cannot exist unless you have power to alter the future," says Fowler, and you cannot effectively have this power unless you are constantly cutting away your own illusions and keeping razor-keen your sense of the fundamental realities. That is probably Greene's greatest contribution; that he is always bringing us back with a sharp jolt to what is real, to the heart of the matter.

MUSLIM CONTRIBUTIONS
TO
MEDIEVAL BENGALI LITERATURE
1622-1672

—SATYENDRANATH GHOSHAL

1

The poets who come under the purview of my discussion today number only two and the period covered is roughly about fifty years. Both the poets under our discussion belonged to the court of Arakan though they went there from Eastern Bengal more by chance than from choice.

The first of these two poets was Daulat Kazi whose solitary work, *Sati Mayana and Lor Chandrani*, not even finished by the poet himself, is only at our disposal. Yet its importance in the early history of Bengali literature is too great to be told.

Before we begin our discussion let us for a moment take stock of the kind of literature that was current in the country at that time. Bengali literature—all in verse—was no doubt in a fairly finished form even before the seventeenth century, though it was then mixed too much with religion. In fact even if any romance was attempted in this time, its motif invariably was the praise of some god or goddess. All Hindu writers, earlier and even later, wrote in pursuance of this tradition, and the practice continued for such a long time that even Bharatchandra's *Vidya Sundar* was composed in order to sing the glory of the goddess Durga so that the work was known as *Kalika Mangal*.

It was the Muslim poets who first went off this beaten track of interweaving romance and religion, and tried their hands in secular romantic stories imported from older Hindi and Persian works. Thus the Muslim poets of the medieval period may, in a sense, be called the precursor of an era by itself, since their example in the adaptation of varied plots extending sometimes to independent compositions was followed by many in the path, both Hindus and Muslims.

2

It is significant that the earliest Muslim poets invariably used chaste Sanskritic Bengali as the vehicle of their expression, and the words of Perso-Arabic source did not receive any undue preference in their hands. This is evident from the works of both Daulat Kazi and Alaol, the two greatest Muslim poets of Medieval Bengali literature, who form the subject-matter of our present discussion.

Strange though it may seem, both these Muslim poets of Bengali literature sang the praise of the Muse from a far-off mountainous tract beyond the last extremity of the Easternmost Bengal in strong contrast to the native plains from where has been flowing the unceasing stream of the Pierian spring since the 10th century A. D. It is indeed a far cry between the original home of Bengali poetry and the alien country of Arakan in lower Burma where the two top-ranking poets of early Bengali literature wrote.

There is convincing proof that Daulat Kazi, the earlier of the two poets, was the first and the foremost poet of secular romance in Bengali literature, with a date of cast-iron authenticity beyond all controversy. He is not only the earliest, but the greatest of all medieval Muslim poets of Bengali literature so far known. Alaol, the next great poet of Arakan court, is decidedly second to him not only in respect of time but poetic merits also.

It is fairly intriguing that Bengali literature in the seventeenth century should have flourished in the alien territory of Arakan in the court of kings who were Maghs. In order to grasp properly the background in which the Magh kings holding Buddhistic faith came to patronize Bengali literature in this country, it is necessary to take a peep into the past history of Arakan. It will be noticeable that not only these Bengali poets were Muslims, but the Buddhist kings' ministers who directly patronized these poets were also Muslims. These Muslim ministers, such as, Asraph Khan, Soleman, etc. had unique roles in the government of the country, so much so, that it is easy to trace Mohammedan influence in the royal courts of Arakan from early times. In fact, the historians have noticed that although the entire country of Arakan with her kings was professedly Buddhist after the 10th century A. D., Mohammedan influence was very prominent there from a subsequent period. For instance, it may be pointed out that the Buddhist kings of Arakan in between the fifteenth and the seventeenth century each used an

additional Mohammedan appellation with his Pali name. The reason is not far to seek.

For in the beginning of the fifteenth century the Arakan king Naramaikhla (1404-1434), driven by the Burmese raiders, fled to Bengal in 1404, and after waiting there patiently for twenty-six long years on end, he was securely reinstated in his throne in 1430 through the kind and powerful military intervention of the then king of Gaur, Jalaluddin Mohammad (1418-1431), said to be the son of the famous king Raja Ganesh. It is thus that the culture of Gaur stalked along in the wake of the returning king of Arakan, Naramaikhla, at the end of his twenty-six years' interregnum. Its natural result was that the tie of friendship between Bengal and Arakan grew and strengthened as years rolled on, and Mohammedan influence gradually prevailed in the royal court of Arakan.

King Naramaikhla, on his return to Arakan, transferred his capital to Mrohaung in 1433, and this Mrohaung remained the capital of Arakan for the next four centuries. It follows therefore that in the seventeenth century when our Bengali poets Daulat and Alaol were composing poems in the courts of the kings of Arakan, this Mrohaung was still its capital. This Mrohaung has become Rosanga in the works of our poets either as a result of Bengali pronunciation or in consequence of an attempt at Sanskritization, or both.

Anyway, the tie between lower Bengal and Arakan strengthened further when in 1459 the Arakan king Basawapyu (1459-1482) occupied Chittagong which usually continued to be in Arakanese hands for more than two centuries after this. Thus in Daulat's and for the major part of Alaol's time Chittagong was in the hands of the kings of Arakan. This is why talents from Chittagong and its neighbourhood moved towards the capital city of the conquerors in search of fortune as clearly pointed out by Alaol in his first work *Padmavati*. It was in this capital of Arakan, Rosanga, that our two poets of medieval Bengali literature wrote their valuable works.

3

The first and the foremost poet of secular romance in Bengali literature was Daulat Kazi who flourished in the beginning of the seventeenth century. There is clear internal evidence that he wrote his incomplete solitary work in the court of the Arakan king Thiri-thu-dhamma (1622-1638). In the coins of Thiri-thu-dhamma, the

king has been designated as "Lord of the white Elephant" and "Lord of the Red Elephant." This eulogistic title of the king has been distinctly referred to by Daulat also in his work. The name Thirithu-dhamma has been Sanskritized into Sri-Sudharma by both Daulat and Alaol in their works.

For twelve of his sixteen years' reign, Sri-Sudharma remained an uncrowned king in pursuance of an astrological prediction that he would die a year after his coronation. His deferred coronation therefore took place in 1635 after certain grisly rites including human sacrifice. There is a clear hint at this astrological prediction about the king's life in Daulat's work also where the poet says that king Sudharma entrusted the reins of his government to the hands of his minister Asraph Khan out of his fear for life which doubtless points to the astrologer's warning. It appears probable that such predictions, by no means uncommon in the annals of the kings of Arakan, were usually stage-managed as a result of palace-intrigues which so often led to regicides.

It is thus clear that when Daulat began his poem, Sri-Sudharma was an uncrowned king, which means that Daulat must have composed his work some time between 1622 and 1635.

Again, there is internal evidence that Daulat died before he could finish his well begun story and that his half-done work was taken up and completed by Alaol after a considerable lapse of time (1659).

4

The direct source of Daulat's story is a poem *Maina Sat* (Maina, the chaste) composed by a Hindi poet named Sadhana whose date is unknown but evidently earlier than Daulat. The conjecture as to the Hindi source of Daulat's work was initially based on a bare statement of the poet alone. This statement of the poet was formerly our only basis of link between Daulat and his source, since the source too was untraceable till its existence was discovered by me in Tessitori's catalogue. Quite recently however a more conclusive proof of the existence of this source has been traced, and there is no longer any doubt that the Bengali poet had his pattern of the story from Sadhana's work.

From a comparative study of Daulat and Sadhana at least this much is clear that Daulat must have made use of the Hindi work as

much as he needed, and has, at some places, literally put into Bengali lines from Sādhana while at other places he has reproduced only the bare sense of the original. Also there are lines in Daulat which are not traceable in the Hindi poem.

It must however, be mentioned here that Sādhana himself drew from the current folk-lore of Bihar the subject-matter of his own poem, and Daulat too partly had the same at his disposal for a common source. But in the original story of the folk-lore we find that the romantic part has, as usual, been shadowed by the divine intervention of goddess Durga, and the secular motif has been lost to all intents and purposes. In contrast with the original story Daulat's work is free from any religious colouring and it has become much more bright, human and realistic in his hand.

5

The second great Bengali poet of the court of Arakan after Daulat Kazi is known as Alaol. His real or full name is not known, and Alaol may be his pen-name, evidently borrowed from Jayasi's *Padmavat* where Alauddin has been referred to by this name. The poet has given a short introduction of himself in all his works and from this we come to know that his homeland was some village Jalalpur in a perghana known as Fatehabad where his father held an important position under the local Zamindar, Majlis Kutub, who figures in history. This Fatehabad has been described by the poet as an important place in Gaur not far from the river Bhagirathi. It is difficult to locate this Fatehabad unless it is the same as described in the *Aini-Akbari* as a perghana 'in Faridpur, south of Bakherganj and the islands at the mouth of the Ganges.' There is no trace of its site today, and it may have been swallowed by the river.

Alaol's life, as it follows from his own narrative, was quite eventful and of an exciting nature. He seems to have arrived in the court of Arakan purely by chance after a thrilling encounter with the Portuguese pirates who killed his father.

Arrived at Arakan, Alaol soon joined the king's cavalry and quickly endeared himself to the Muslim public by virtue of his versatility and in particular, his command of music. Things seem to have gone well with the poet for some years then during which his prolific pen too was busy. In fact the poet set his hand on as many as four books during this time. The first was his masterpiece *Padmavati* and the second, the first part of *Sayaphulmuluk Badijjamal*. Then he completed the half-done work of

Daulat and composed his fourth work *Sapta Payakar*. Then came a shadow of dark days in the poet's life.

Some time after May 12, 1660, Shah Shuja, defeated and driven by his brother Aurangzeb, came to Arakan, and Alaol seems to have come in contact with the fugitive prince of Delhi, but was soon to regret this. For Shuja came into the disfavour of the Arakan king not long after his arrival and was mercilessly slaughtered with all his retinue. The king did not stop there, but severely dealt with Shuja's friends and associates too. The unfortunate Bengali poet, on the false and malicious report of a man named Mirja, was also tried for treason and had to serve a prison sentence. He was released at the end of his term which was not long, but his evil days continued for about nine years even after his release till he was lucky to meet one Syed Musa who took pity on the poor old suffering poet and made him take his pen once again to complete his half done second work *Sayaphulmuluk Badiojjamal*. Two years after this, Alaol wrote his last work *Dara Sikandarnama*. The poet seems to have lived to a ripe old age.

Alaol was one of the ablest and perhaps the most prolific poet of early and late medieval Bengali literature, and though all his works are either translations or adaptations of other authors, his achievement as a poet, a scholar and above all a historian of contemporaneous events is beyond doubt.

-6

Alaol's first and the best poem *Padmavati* was composed in the court of Arakan during the reign of Thado Mintar (1645—1652), at the request of his chief minister Magana Thakur who is said to be a poet himself though his identity is still shrouded in mystery. According to Alaol, Magana was a very important personage in Arakan court and his relation with the royal family was also most intimate. After Narapatigyi's death in 1645, his son Thado Mintar succeeded to the throne 'in his prime of youth', but it seems that the rule of the kingdom virtually vested on Magana through the Queen dowager. His influence seems to have continued even for the first few years of the king Sandothudhamma's reign till Magana's probable death in 1658.

While History shows quite a poor knowledge about Thado Mintar and his reign, Alaol has waxed eloquent over this young king and his kingdom in the exordium of his first work. He has not only given a vivid pen-picture of the king but has graphically described his capital,

palace and court where mirth and wealth were never in want. The king sat on his throne in all his royal glory while people poured down into the capital from all parts of the world. The king's army and navy were strong and vast the very sight of which struck terror into the heart of the enemy. His hunting expeditions were gigantic in size and character, and there was an unreserved extravagance of pomp and splendour everywhere. Alaol has also mentioned Thado Mintar as the "Lord of the Red and White elephant" which precisely agrees with this king's appellation as found in his coins.

Again Alaol has said that with Nṛpaṅkha (i. e. Narapatigyi) on the throne the direct dynasty of Minbi (i. e. Minbin) became extinct which is historically true, because Narapatigyi, who was but a paramour of Natshinme, chief queen of Thiri-thudhamma, was in no way connected with the royal family. This Narapatigyi, according to Alaol, had a son and a daughter of whom the son, whose name was Thado Mintar, succeeded to the throne. Now, History betrays no knowledge of the existence of the daughter, and calls Thado a nephew (or brother's son) of Narapatigyi.

7

Alaol's *Padmavati*, though a great work in itself, is principally a translation, or more correctly, an adaptation of the famous Hindi work *Padmavat* (1520-1540) of the great Hindi poet Jayasi whose model, again, could be linked with another older work *Mrgavati* of Kutvan. But in so far as the skeleton of the story is concerned, even Kutvan is also not strictly original. The primary source can possibly be traced to the Apabhramśa literature and it seems that Kutvan also had one or two predecessors in the treatment of this plot either in the poet Damo, or in Mullah Daud (fl. 14th century) or in both. But a unique feature of Jayasi's poem, apart from hundred other things, is its historical background which distinguishes it from all his predecessors' works. It is for this reason that Alaol's poem too may be said to be the first work in Bengali literature outside biographies which has a historical character in it.

The bare skeleton of Jayasi's story, at least the king's marriage with the help of a parrot (i. e. Ratanasena-Padmavati episode) certainly compares quite favourably with a Sanskrit story in which king Rupasena (cp. Ratanasena of Jayasi) married princess Candravati (cp. Padmavati of Jayasi) in consequence of a prediction by his parrot named Churaman (cp. Hiranman of Jayasi). This version of the Sanskrit

story is due to Shivadasa who must have written his work not later than the 15th century, and with which Jayasi's acquaintance cannot be said to be unlikely.

Alaol wrote his *Padmavati*, as is known from internal evidence, in the court of Thadō Miptar some time during the king's reign (1645-1652). A nearer approximation in regard to the date of its composition, is baffling.

Alaol owes the entire plot of his *Padmavati* to Jayasi and has verbatim translated many lines from the Hindi work. Nevertheless, the Bengali poet has taken great many liberties in his adaptation of the narrative which should never be considered a faithful translation of the original from start to finish. Even where the poet translates, he is very free and seldom hesitates to bring in new matters and to leave out those he considers unsuitable for his purpose. In fact he has condensed, elaborated, inserted and left out lines and altered words, names and even sense to suit his purpose.

Some of the alleged principal differences between Jayasi and Alaol are, however, to be viewed from a newer angle today. For instance, from Shukla's text of Jayasi's *Padmavat* and also from Shirreff's English translation, there was formerly an erroneous view that the *bard* in Jayasi, who brought about a compromise between Gandharvasena and Ratnasena was God Mahadeva himself in disguise, and that Alaol had improved upon Jayasi by introducing a *human bard* and by doing away with the scene of divine interventions in Jayasi. The fact of the matter, however, is that Jayasi too never brought in the divine figures in this scene, and that in his work also a *human bard* did all that was necessary to be done. All the stanzas referring to divine interventions and all that in this scene in Jayasi have been rightly rejected by the modern scholars, on ground of interpolation.

The most remarkable of all differences between the Hindi and the Bengali works is in the conclusive part of the story where the Bengali poet so widely differs from Jayasi that the genuineness of the composition of this portion has been rightly questioned. In fact the conclusive part in the Bengali poem, as in the Battala edition, is so absurdly sloppy and melodramatic, making a travesty of history, that it is difficult to connect Alaol with its composition. The suggestion that Alauddin came to Chitor and lived with the sons of Ratnasena for half a decade is so preposterous that an end like this is conceivable only in a fairy tale and not in a great epical work, a real

mile-stone in Bengali literature, as Alaol's *Padmavati* doubtless is. On the top of this, the conclusion in the Bengali work, as we find it, is contrary to what Alaol promises us in the early stage of his poem where he summarizes Jayasi's story to be followed by him. The poetic style of the narrative in this portion is also of a very much inferior quality. Taking all these points into account, our inevitable conclusion is that the Bengali poem, as we find it in print, has changed hands right from the scene of Gora and Badal's fight till the very end.

8

On his own admission, Alaol began the composition of his second book *Sayaphulmuluk Badiojjamal* during the reign of Sandothudhamma (1652—1684) at the request of the same patron Magana Thakur who had inspired his first and the foremost work *Padmavati*. But Alaol left his second work unfinished on account of a serious reverse of fortune as the poet himself states when he resumes its composition nine years after Shah Shuja's fatal end which came early in 1661 (*Infra*).

We have already remarked that Alaol's works are pre-eminently important from a historical point of view and the poem *Sayaphulmuluk Badiojjamal* is no exception in this respect. In many ways this work may be reckoned as a most valuable historical record, since it contains clear details about Shah Shuja's last phase of life. It also contains the longest eulogy of the Arakan king Sandothudhamma, sanskritized into Sri-Chandra-Sudharma by Alaol, and in it we come across quite an exhaustive account of the reign of this greatest king of Arakan. In the coins of Chandra-Sudharma, we find that his Pali title was "Moon-like righteous king", in *Sayaphulmuluk Badiojjamal* also Alaol refers to this king as one whose "body outmatches the moon's beauty" which obviously refers to his Pali title. This king has also been described as the "Lord of the Golden Palace" in his coins, and in Alaol's second poem too we find the king as "King of gold" and the "earth made of gold" in his time.

Again, Alaol speaks of the kingdom of Arakan being entrusted to the joint hands of the son and the daughter of Thado Mintar (1645-1652), while the widowed queen, loyal to her husband's memory was passing her days in various acts of piety. The daughter and Magana seemed to have important roles in the administration of the state, and the good name of the monarch Chandra-Sudharma might have been predominantly due to these two. The king's minister

Soleman, a fast friend of Magan, also figures prominently in this context. Thus Alaol is credited to have supplied such important facts as are yet unknown to the historians and will undoubtedly throw new light on the reigns of some of the Arakan kings.

9

The source of the plot of *Sayaphulmuluk Badiojjamal* is the famous story of the same name in the Arabian Nights. But though Alaol's story, on the whole, agrees with that in the Arabian Nights, the Bengali poet has diverged wildly from the original story in many of his details, and has, as is his wont, taken great many liberties not only in the handling of the plot but even in his choice of names here and there.

From a literary point of view *Sayaphulmuluk Badiojjamal* is doubtless inferior to Alaol's first work *Padmavati*. Again, the first half of *Sayaphulmuluk Badiojjamal* is better than the second half which is comparatively dull, and there is neither any grand description nor any imposing picture in it. The battle-scene is unnecessarily long, drab for the most part, and colourless and fantastic. This battle-scene has been modelled after the Hindu epics the *Ramayana* or the *Mahabharata*, and the principal weapons used are arrows which cut one another and the heroes fight like 'Karna and Arjuna' and display "Ravana's power" though, in between, they 'remember the prophet Soleman' also.

The wedding between Sayaphul and Badiojjamal, as described by Alaol, though essentially Muslim in character, doubtless bears traces of customs typical in a Bengali *Hindu* marriage. Thus we come across 'welfare-ceremony' (maṅgala ācāra) with curd and other things. Then the 'curtain between the bride and the bridegroom is lightly removed and the two take each other's hands, and their four eyes meet in an auspicious union'. Even then the Bengali poet is not satisfied, and the 'seven times going round' i. e., 'saptapadi gamana' is also made to follow. The 'nuptial knot' between the bride and the bridegroom is also tied.

Again, when the marriage of Mallika and Sayad is settled, an astrologer comes and fixes the auspicious day for the wedding to take place.

10

In the immediate wake of the first part of his *Sayaphulmuluk Badiojjamal*, Alaol set his hand on the composition of that portion of Daulat Kazi's *Sati Mayana* which was lying unfinished for more than

a quarter of a century. Fortunately for us, Alaol himself has very clearly mentioned the passage of years in between Daulat's end and his own beginning and has recorded the date of finishing his part both in Muslim and in Arakanese (Maghi) years. The enigmatic verses indicating the above two dates lead to the identical year of 1659 A. D. which may therefore be safely taken to be the year of the composition of Alaol's part of *Sati Mayana*.

As in his first two works, here also Alaol has, in the beginning, given us many valuable informations about the Arakan king Chandra-Sudharma during whose reign he writes it at the request of his patron Soleman. In this work also, Alaol refers to the king Chandra-Sudharma as one whose "religion is as bright as the moon" which doubtless alludes to the king's Pali title "Moon-like righteous king" found in his coin.

As a work of poetry, Alaol's portion of *Sati Mayana*, though doubtless inferior to his *Padmavati*, is neat, to the point, and hardly ever dull anywhere. There is little doubt that Alaol was very busy when he was writing his part of *Sati Mayana*, but this speed seems to have been a contributing factor to the merit of the work rather than to its defect. Conciseness, the lack of which, so often makes our medieval poetry drab and monotonous, is a forte of this work.

11.

Alaol's fourth poem is *Sapta Payakar* or *the Seven Images* which bears clear mention of Shah Shuja's arrival in Arakan. From this short and casual reference, it is clear that the poet had not yet been acquainted with this fugitive 'prince of Delhi' with whom he had later developed an intimacy. It thus seems certain that the composition of this fourth work had engaged Alaol's pen some time about the middle of 1660 when Shah Shuja had only arrived in Arakan. That the time-limit cannot be lengthened much farther is evident from the fact that Shuja's fate was decided in less than a year after his arrival, about which there is not the faintest hint in this work.

As usual, in his *Sapta Payakar* too, Alaol has given a panegyric to king Chandra-Sudharma, which is short but to the point. The poet speaks in this work also, of the king living in a 'palace of gold' which, as has already been said, is undoubtedly reminiscent of an appellation of the king found in his coins.

After the customary divine eulogy which is fairly long, the poet

passes on to give an account of the Persian poet Nizami whose last or the fifth book is the source of this work.

Of the many interesting pictures that distinguish this work, mention may be made of the scene in which Baharam takes the crown from a brace of tigers; of the many scenes of hunting, a picture of famine, of the prisoners' scene and similar others. A few lines from the scene of famine are quoted here:

".....The trees became fruitless, and there was no corn in the fields. The rivers and the springs dried up, and the days of sorrow set in. There was no leaf in the trees and the earth cracked. The price of a piece of bread was equal to that of gold or of gems. The quadrupeds perished for want of grass and water. All men began to eat earth. When king Baharam heard all this, he was so much worried that he lost his night's sleep. He ordered that the royal granary should be opened and the corns sold at half price. The rich would pay only half the price, but the poor would receive these free according to the number of heads in the family...At places free canteens were opened for distribution of food and water....".

12

After *Sapta Payakar* (1660) Alaol composed the second portion of *Sayaphulmuluk Badiojjamal* round about 1670. In this interval of about a decade, however, the poet's pen was not lying idle, and he seems to have been trying his hand in a work outside the field of romance probably for the sake of novelty or from religious ardour which was never wanting in him. He thus composed his fifth work "*Tohpha*" in 1662. *Tohpha* is not a book of romance and has no literary importance. It is a book containing religious and moral counsels, meant for the followers of Islam.

Eight years after the composition of the *Tohpha*, the poet had taken to the composition of his penultimate work, the second portion of *Sayaphulmuluk Badiojjamal*. Then follows his last poem, *Dara Sekandarnama*, which is an adaptation of Nizami's Persian work, *Iskandernama*.

An approximate date for the composition of *Dara Sekandarnama* is obtained from the poet's introduction of himself. Here he mentions some details of his past intimacy with Saha Shuja which, as has been already said, ended in a fatal consequence. In this context Alaol has recorded the passage of years between this critical time and the composition of his last work, *Dara Sekandarnama*.

It is clear from this record that the composition of *Dara Sekandarnama* was taken up eleven years after the troublesome affairs into which the poet had fallen in the wake of Shah Shuja's affairs. There is therefore little doubt that the composition of *Dara Sekandarnama* was undertaken some time round about 1672.

This last work of Alaol is conspicuous by the absence of the name of the Arakan king. This omission which seems wilful is explained by the conjecture that the poet must have been out of favour with the king and his court even at this time in view of his association with Shah Shuja. In fact the poet's difficulties continue even long after the end of his prison-term, for he is still financially involved when he is writing his last poem.

The poet's patron now is one Majlis Navaraja who seems unrelated to the king's court and may be some emir who is not only rich and bountiful but is a lover of books and patron of scholars.

Iskandarnama, the penultimate work of the great Persian poet, Nizami, describes the life and conquests of Alexander the Great. History, in respect of time, is, however, so awfully muddled up in the Persian poem, and for the matter of that, in Alaol's last work that we need a word or two to caution us about the identity of the famous Greek hero as reflected in the literature with which we are concerned here. Nizami's Sikandar Shah (as also Alaol's) is half the famous Greek conqueror and half a fictitious prophet of Islam, though the Persian poet is somewhat cautious about not definitely mentioning Alexander as a prophet belonging to the post-Muhammad period (i. e. after c. 580 A. D.). He seems to suggest that Sikandar was of the religion of Ibrahim (Abraham). Alaol has gone a step further and frequently mentions Sekandar's religion as 'dina Muhammad' i. e. the religion of Muhammad.

The fact of the matter is that "in the Muhammedan accounts of the world-conqueror, there are here and there, echoes of genuine historical tradition, but as a rule we have to deal with legendary tales, which originate in the romance of Alexander and were considerably extended and embellished by later writers....."

That the Alexander of the romances of the Persian poets was not the contemporary of Dara but a different Zulkarnain was perhaps known to many of the earlier historians also. Among the Muslim poets Alexander has a legendary halo round him and very often "he appears as the champion of the true faith, because his epithet Zulkarnain

which is variously interpreted led to his being identified with the prophet of the same name" in the Koran. The majority of the expositors of the Koran "distinguish an earlier and a later Zulkarnain", one or the other of whom is often identified with Alexander. Anyway there is admittedly a lot of confusion in the identity of Zulkarnain, and for that matter, of Sekandar Shah in the stories of the older Muslim poets.

Alaol's frequent reference to Sekandar Shah as a torch-bearer of the religion of Muhammad should not therefore be taken too literally and the numerous anachronistic tales narrated by these poets need not worry us seriously.

13

No work of Alaol is more faithful to its source than his *Dara Sekandarnama*, in so far as the story is concerned. As a matter of fact, the poet has nowhere deviated from the original story beyond retouching one picture or another here and there. All the same, the poet has been, as is his genre, very free in his translation, and has not only taken great many liberties, but has, independently of the source, drawn from the Indian stock as well. The wedding scene, for example, has nothing in common with Nizami, and the Bengali poet has pictured an Indian marriage, partly Hindu and partly Mohammedan. Only a few lines taken at random from this long scene of festivity will show how Alaol has gone his own way in this poem also as elsewhere. Alexander's marriage takes place in this poem thus :

(i)Sekandar ordered his officers to arrange the celebration of the marriage and the "maṅgala ācāra".

(ii) At the auspicious hour, the plantain trees.....were planted.All the women of the family began to rub oil on (the body of) the bride. A wrist-band of thread was tied to the hand of the Shah at the auspicious hour.

(iii) The bride was taken round the Shah seven times

In this way the Shah's marriage is solemnized according to the "religion of Ibrahim and Ishak." The readers will now make their own conclusion as to how much Alaol followed the Muslim customs in this marriage and how much did he take from the customs of a wedding ceremony of the Hindus.

ECONOMIC GROWTH¹

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The revival of interest in the problems of economic growth since the depression of the thirties, and, more particularly, since the end of the second world war, has re-emphasized the fact that economists have not yet been able to establish an integrated logical framework that interprets and explains all problems of a developing economy. This failure is largely a reflection of the difficulties of analysing a complex problem, which involves at the same time inter-commodity, inter-personal and inter-temporal comparisons, i. e. the "index number" problem in all its manifestations. Then there is the fact that empirical knowledge of the required types is comparatively scanty, despite all the work that has been done in economic history. And, in the final analysis, there is also the important fact that the fundamental problems of economic development do not relate to economics alone, but also very largely to political institutions, administrative systems, social factors and ethical value-judgements.

One should also note that there have been discontinuities in the progress of studies in the problems of growth. For about half a century—from the seventies of the 19th century to the twenties of the present—economic analysis was largely dominated by investigations into the field of micro-economics. Aggregative or macro-economic studies were the exception rather than the rule. The standard curriculum that came to be set up for the student of economics included macro-economics only when he was dealing with such problems as monetary policy or business cycles. The emphasis on micro-economics was partly due to the impetus given by Alfred Marshall to its study and partly also to the fact that it was the English writers (with Marshall

1. This is an attempt at reconstruction in a summary form of an extempore talk given at the Visva-Bharati University Study Circle on February 1, 1958.

leading) who set the way and the English writers at the turn of the century had taken economic growth as practically granted.

On the other hand, the English "Classicals" who had developed the first systematic and internally consistent theory of economic growth, could observe the problems of development in the raw. England in the late 18th and early 19th centuries was facing practically the same type of problems that countries like India are facing now—large technological changes combined with structural and other rigidities in many sectors, growing population, inadequacy of the domestic output of consumer goods (specially food), inflationary pressures and balance of payments difficulties. The classical writers, particularly Ricardo, tried to visualise all these problems in a single compass and sought to establish a theoretical framework which would explain the process of economic growth and also the ultimate tendency of the process to flatten itself out in a "stationary state." If the classical assumptions regarding diminishing returns, emergence of rent, growth of population and the resulting supply of labour, subsistence wages, accumulation of capital and the resulting demand for labour are all accepted, the system developed by Ricardo is logically unexceptionable in its purely mechanical content.

The classical analysis of economic growth was pursued further, not by those who were his natural disciples, but by Marx. A study of the problems of growth in a community with more than one factor and more than one output raises the problem of relative values and the English writers of the late 19th century were intrigued by this problem of valuation. Emphasis was thus shifted and there was an easy transition from the problem of relative values to the "partial analyses" of individual prices and consequently to all the paraphernalia of micro-economic analysis. Marx, on the other hand, followed the main current of the classical analysis and developed a theory of growth which is essentially Ricardian. The socialist in Marx could not accept diminishing returns, but his "falling rate of profits" established what Ricardo sought to establish. The optimist in Marx could not accept the gloomy population law of Malthus, but the concept of the "industrial reserve army" introduced the same elasticity (actually quicker from the standpoint of time-reaction) to the supply curve of labour as was provided by the idea of a wage-induced growth of population.

When Soviet Russia in the present century started searching for a theoretical basis for her development plans, she got through Marx a

large dose of Ricardo. And it is also true that many economists of the present generation re-discovered Ricardo through Russian discussions and Marx. There was at the same time a revival of interest in aggregative economics, brought about very largely by the attempts that were made to understand the unwieldy problems of the depression of the thirties. The search for an adequate business cycle theory led not only to the study of the fluctuations in aggregate demand and supply, but later also to the discovery of a close link between the oscillatory forces and the trend forces in the economy. The development of economic dynamics as an important branch of study is a direct result of this. This development is a very recent one and it is not therefore surprising that the theoretical structure of economic dynamics has not yet been able to establish close links with the logical structure required to explain fully the historical process of economic development.

The difficulties in the way of developing a complete and adequate theory of growth are many. There is, for example, the conceptual problem of defining economic growth in a many-person, many-commodity world. A single individual with a single commodity, becomes "richer" if he has more of that commodity, unless the commodity is such that increasing quantities are an increasing nuisance. This is obviously a tautology, but this tautology is necessary to realise the difficulties of defining economic growth. A single individual with more than one commodity is uncontestably more prosperous if he has more of every single thing. If he has more of one and less of another, we have the problem of summation of "unaddables", the so-called index-number problem, and we have to adopt some standard of relative valuation. If there are two or more individuals in our example, we can uncontestably conclude that prosperity has increased in the economy, if everybody has more of everything. If this is not so, i.e. if some have "gained" and some have "lost", we have not only the index-number problem described above, but also the problem of social aggregation, of interpersonal comparisons, of adding algebraically the feelings of gain or loss of different individuals. And for this there has to be some value-judgement somewhere for the society as a whole.

This means that a definition of economic growth, or a measure of the society's income, requires in the final analysis a major premise incorporating what the society wants and what it does not want and also indicating the intensity with which the wanted things

are wanted. Such a major premise can be dictated by a benevolent despot but in a democratic society it would be extremely difficult to arrive at an ordering of social priorities from the complex of individual preferences. But there is no definition of growth, unless there is such a major premise, or what may be called a "social welfare postulate," however crudely it may have been chosen.

The choice of a social welfare postulate does not end all problems. There are other choices to be made and these are difficult because of the resource problem. If we know our desired targets and have a full inventory of our resources in real terms, we could say that we should reach our targets with the minimum aggregate cost. But cost in the social sense is difficult to define and special problems are raised by (i) the fact that resources in the aggregate are limited, (ii) the fact that particular resources may be to limited in supply as to create "bottlenecks" for everything else, (iii) the fact that some resources can be used for alternative purposes, (iv) the fact that some resources are "specific", i. e. can be used for one particular purpose only, (v) the fact that some resources are substitutable by other, at least within certain ranges, (vi) the fact that some resources are unsubstitutable, and a number of similar other considerations.

All this means a complicated choice problem—a problem which takes two broad forms. There is first, the problem of choosing the investment-pattern, i. e. of choosing the lines of production that are to be encouraged and the lines which are to be discouraged (it being impossible on account of resource-limitation to encourage all lines simultaneously) And there is, secondly, the problem of choosing the techniques of production, i. e. of choosing the particular factor-combinations by which the chosen lines of production are to be developed. If a , b , c ,... are commodities and x , y , z ,...the...resources, and if a given amount of a can be produced by $10x + 6y$ or by $8x + 8y$, the choice of the latter will release more x for the production of b and c but will reduce the amount of y available to these. The problem of the choice of techniques is not thus a "particular" problem for each industry ; all the choice problems in regard to technique in all the industries are intertwined from the standpoint of the economy as a whole and one can say that the problems of technical choice and of investment pattern are ultimately one big problem of optimal resource allocation. This optimum naturally is dependent on the welfare postulate chosen

and the whole problem thus becomes a difficult mixture of technology, economics, accountancy and ethics.

There are two other problems which are closely connected with these. Just as the economy has to choose whether to produce more *a* or more *b*, there is also the problem of choosing whether to produce more *a* now or to restrict the present production of *a* with a view to securing a higher rate of future output of *a* than would otherwise be possible. This has sometimes been stated as the problem of the choice between maximising the current output and maximising the growth potential. It may also be that the choice is not really between more *a* now and more *a* in the future, but between more *a* now and more *b* in the future, or to make it more realistic, between a particular heterogeneous collection now and another heterogeneous collection in the future. And, then, as the "future" is not a given point of time situated at a fixed time distance from the present moment, one has to think really of the choice from among alternative time-paths of the outputs of bundles of heterogeneous commodities.

Together with this there is the big social problem of evaluation of group interests. it would be easy to accept the position that the best solution is one which secures the highest rate of growth for each group or preferably for each individual. If this is not possible, a choice has to be made regarding the groups which will get a greater share of the growth and the groups whose relative shares would decline. This again is a difficult problem in a democratic state and it is well-known that "uneconomic" policies have often to be deliberately chosen because it is politically difficult, or considered ethically undesirable to injure the interests of a particular group of persons, who may be capitalists, labour unions or cottage artisans.

Despite all these difficulties, some interesting attempts have been made in recent years to explain growth in broad theoretical terms, or, at least, to explain the mechanics of the growth process. Economic historians, for example, have sought to define the process of economic growth in terms of certain predisposing conditions of an industrial "take off", a group of institutional factors relating to the size and productivity of the working force, a group of technical factors regarding consumption levels, capital-output ratios etc, and such fundamental propensities as the propensities to develop science, to apply science for economic ends, to accept innovations. All this however still keeps the theory of economic growth on a superficial

level, because as an economic historian one should explain under what circumstances the "pre-conditions" appear and as an economic analyst one has to explain the conditions which make the take-off self-sustained.

Clearly distinguished from these historical approaches stands the Keynesian line of thinking which was developed mostly by post-Keynesian economists. Starting from the general relation between investment and income, one can try to relate the saving-income ratio with the capital-output ratio by equating savings-with capital-formation. If one can postulate (i) a "natural" rate of growth for the economy depending on the rate at which technical progress is being achieved and (ii) a "warranted" rate of growth determined by the savings rate and given technological conditions, one can show how the actual rate of growth may differ from either and how the movement of the economy is itself affected by these divergences and their interactions.

The main difficulty is such broad aggregative analysis is that one loses touch with reality, where capital may be of various types and outputs are also heterogeneous, so that the overall capital-output ratios have little real meaning. Besides, the important fact in most of the long-period problems of development is that the savings-income ratios and the capital-income ratios are not constant. They not only vary, but vary in response to the process of development itself.

It has been a natural development out of all this to apply econometric data and tools to the growth problems. A theoretically perfect econometric model of growth would be one which takes into account the productivities of capital and of labour in each individual line of production. This however is not always practicable and one has to make simplifying assumptions. The famous Mahalanobis model, for example, takes into account four sectors, one producing capital goods and the remaining three producing three broad groups of consumer goods and services. Correspondingly, there are four employment components in the total volume of employment in the community, four income-components and four investment-components. It then assumes certain values for the capital-output ratios in the different sections and also for capital-labour ratios and then, with a given total of investment funds, seeks to discover what would be the income and employment in the different sectors.

For ordinary short period planning or forecasting such models are often useful, but in a planned economy in which large changes

are sought to be brought about within a short time, it is necessary to note that the technical ratios that are assumed will not and cannot remain fixed. One can also point out that such models take a very mechanistic view of the economic process and ignore altogether the varieties of human behaviour and of the response of demand to the different conditions of production and supply. There is, besides, what the logicians describe as "artificial closure," or the deliberate assuming away of disturbing factors. If the consumers are not free to decide about the nature, volume and timing of their own consumption, the production process can be carried out independently and will not be held up by demand-deficiency. The econometric models based on technical inter-relations and on nothing else are thus perfectly valid in a fully controlled economy. The really difficult problems arise in an economy in which consumer freedom is valued and the planning authorities at the same time realise that uncontrolled private enterprise will lead to results which will not accord with the accepted social welfare postulate.

In such an economy the problem of feasibility becomes important for many reasons. The ideal social welfare premise may never be capable of being deduced but a feasible welfare premise may be taken as generally acceptable. And then what is technically feasible may not be economically feasible, and by taking all these into consideration one can conceive of a feasibility frontier, on or within which all solutions of the economic problem will lie. This has sometimes been described as the "principle of the second best," but one can also describe it as the principle of the realisable best.

What has been said here is not intended to convey that we do not understand anything about the development process or that in the absence of a full understanding, appropriate policies cannot be recommended. While we have emphasized difficulties, we have also noted that attempts are being made on many fronts to explore the possible lines of advancement. Fortunately, there is not much difference of opinion about the effects of the fundamental variables—of changes in investment, in consumption propensities or export-import relations. One can find a large measure of difference in regard to the integration of the theories of growth, but one would find general agreement in regard to the problems of domestic inflationary pressures or of balance of payments strains which are the natural results of a quickening of the development process.

One also notes that empirical knowledge is improving fast and in this field India's experience is probably the most important element. India is the only historical example of a large and overpopulated poor country trying to achieve quick development by planning under a democratic system. And, as such, India is providing to all economists a laboratory in which one can observe the validity of the theoretical hypotheses that have often been made about the effects of a speeding up of the development process. The fundamental difficulties outlined in the earlier part of this discussion still remain and many of them will not be completely solved in the near future, but one cannot fail to note that even when the fundamentals of physiology and the nature of diseases remain undiscovered, it is a great achievement if people know how to cure a particular collection of symptoms and recommend methods for making the system more efficient than it is. Economists of the present day are slowly discovering the nature of the problems of poverty and growth and they have already advanced some distance in their search for symptomatic treatment of the economic malaise of poor societies.

EXISTENTIALIST LITERATURE

SUDHIN GHOSE

The purpose of the present address is not to expound the philosophical doctrine known as Existentialism (associated with Kierkegaard, Husserl, Jaspers, Heidegger, and others), but to examine the common bond which links together such authors as Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Albert Camus, and their associates.

These French authors were virtually unknown even in France before the World War II. However, within the brief period between the end of the War and today, they have attained fame not only in their own country but have come to be regarded as figures of outstanding importance in world literature.

In which way are they different from the favourite authors in Great Britain of the post World Wars—the World War I and the World War II? From authors like Aldous Huxley, Laurence Housman, Lytton Strachey, D. H. Lawrence and Richard Aldington, to name only a few of the successful writers of the post World War I? Broadly speaking, these English novelists and playwrights and biographers dealt with the theme of "*Futility*" and "*Disenchantment*": they were interested in dethroning the gods of their forebears—the heroes of the Victorians and the Edwardians—and in ridiculing the moral and the material prizes once highly esteemed by them.

If we take the English favourites of today—the new writers of the post World War II—Kingsley Amis, Colin Wilson, William Sansom, Angus Wilson, and John Osborne—we shall find the generalisation "angry young men" not inappropriate: for the "angry young men" are primarily concerned with giving expression to their resentment at what they consider the shortcomings of the society in which they live. In one word, the theme of their novels and plays is "*Frustration*". (The note of "*Frustration*" is perceptible in the post-war biographies of Thackeray, John Ruskin, Walter Savage Landor, etc.)

Now to come back to the French existentialist writers, though they form no "school" or "cénacle" (to use the French word), they have one common fundamental tenet—very different from "*Futility*,"

“Disenchantment,” and “Frustration.” And it is, in brief, the insistence on the actual *existence* of the individual. The act of conscious, deliberately-willed existence is of greater consequence than mere living with a reliance on theories and abstractions.

In other words, man is what he makes of himself : he is not predestined by the stars, or by a deity, or by society, or by biology. He has a free will and the responsibility that goes with it. If he refuses to exercise his judgment and choice or allows outside forces to determine him, he is contemptible and will bring about his own undoing.

These authors insist on actions—including the acts of will—as the determining factors in a man’s life. They recognize that the basic elements in man include the irrationality of the unconscious and the subconscious. Nevertheless, the role of the conscious mind is of great import. Life is dynamic, a constant state of flux ; it is no abstraction, but a series of consecutive moments. And how you exercise your will—and the consequences derived from the the positive act of will—will determine your fate, your existence.

If we analyse Jean-Paul Sartre’s *The Vicious Circle* (*Le Huis Clos*)* we shall see how the characters, instead of “existing”, made their lives “hell” on earth. In his **The End of the Day* (*La Fin du Jour*) the characters are given the chance of “redeeming” themselves, but they fail to do so : because they lived a loveless life. More important from a purely literary point of view is Albert Camus (and the contents of his *The Plague* (*La Peste*) were analysed) : the moral plague for Camus is a graver menace than an epidemic : it is an unpardonable crime to leave the lamp unlit.

* Analysis left out

RELIGION OF 'EACHES'

BENOY GOPAL ROY

In this paper I intend to discuss the future of religion. The subject is an ambitious and baffling one. Nobody can prophesy but certain conclusions can be deduced from data that are available. Again future of religion will be the same everywhere. Broadly speaking, same scientific, social, economic and cultural forces are at work all over the world. Today the entire mankind tends to behave as one body. The consciousness of a particular nation mingles with that of another and enriches the world consciousness.

People seek God in different ways of religiosity. Hence there are different types of religious people. An enumeration of the main types is given below.

The Orthodox type: They are usually addicted to a meticulous performance of rituals. Every ritual is observed as if it is an end in itself. In other words, the rituals occupy the lofty position of deities. Many of them are otherwise good citizens but seldom do they possess a broad outlook. Sometimes they turn into fanatics and take to violence for the furtherance of their motives. They are true to the letter of their scripture and not to its spirit. They are the type of people so despised by Christ as scribes and pharises and every religion has its own scribes and pharises.

The Mystic type : They are not satisfied with the husk of religion ; they aim at its core. They rise above the texts and abide by the the true spirit of religion. They rely on some inner vision or inspiration to unravel the divine mystery. Catholicity, peace, submission to the Almighty and love for all—form the main ingredients of their religious behaviour. Sometimes they are persecuted but calmly do they bear all persecutions, pains and sufferings. A mystic often loses himself in emotional joys and ecstasies and a sense of other-worldliness permeates his entire being.

The Service type : They believe in God or the highest spiritual Principle. They serve Him by serving man. Selfless service is their religion. They undertake such humanitarian activities as education

for the ignorant, care for the sick and relief for the distressed as religious duties. They are generally liberal in their religious views but they do not extend their social service beyond the pale of human beings.

The Ethical type : Closely allied to the previous type is the ethical one. They have an implicit faith in God or the highest Principle as the moral governor of the world. But no prayers, meditations or observances of rituals mark their religious behaviour. Consistently do they follow the ethical principles and never question about their rationale. Fully alive to duties and virtues, they are good neighbours, good citizens and good men. They however differ from the previous type in not maintaining that the spirit of social service is the only expression of the sense of religion. A large number of liberal Buddhists and Jainas would come under the ethical type. But do they believe in God ? In certain forms of Buddhism, Buddha himself comes to be conceived as God. In the concept of Amitabha Buddha we have Buddha as the Dharmakaya who for all practical purposes takes the place of God. Also the Jainas who reject God meditate on the liberated souls (Siddhas). Prayer to the five pure souls forms the daily routine of a devout Jaina.

The Agnostic type : There is yet another type. They are agnostics. They know that God is, but do not care to know what He is. God to them is unknowable. They however carefully observe the ethical principles for they think that no society can endure without them.

Science has challenged the literal authority of the religious scriptures. Science recognizes experience and reason and is willing to accept the scriptures provided they do not run counter to either of them. Modern biology, astronomy, geology, physics and chemistry offer us one type of explanation while the scriptures offer us another. Often the two clash and many people reject scriptural authority since in most cases it does not admit of verification. Religion is concerned with spiritual values but sciences are occupied with mechanical laws. The religious viewpoint is teleological while the scientific standpoint is physical and causal. Again science takes up the question of factual judgments but religion's sole occupation lies with value judgments. But are science and religion really opposed to each other ? The aim of both science and religion is the same ; viz., Knowledge of reality. Both facts and values, as Brightman says,

arise in the same human mind and apply to the same universe. (See Brightmān, *A Philosophy of Religion*, p. 484-5). Both science and religion have to be taken into account. They are but two of the many paths that lead to Reality.

The above should be the proper view concerning the relation between science and religion. But there is always a gap between the *is* and the *should*. Science and religion, a few decades ago, were at loggerheads with each other. Though the animosity is not very keen today, still the majority of scientists including Bertrand Russell attach all importance to science and nothing to religion. Logical positivists again assert that religious propositions about God are not verifiable and hence they do not yield any truth. The quarrel between the two goes on though there is no aggression from either side these days.

Science can be viewed from two angles, viz., as Knowledge and as Power. Primarily it is Knowledge; it seeks general laws governing a number of particular facts. But this aspect of science, Russell maintains, is being pushed to the back-ground by its aspect of power. Science today is mostly known as the power to manipulate Nature. This aspect of science is leading mankind to devastation and ruin. Drunk with power, scientists will no longer be lovers of Truth and Nature. Science as power has led many scientists to despair and disappointment. Social philosophers of our times are equally disgusted. According to some of them, the scientific and technological culture is fast dying out. Crushed under its mechanical load, the masses have become weary, disillusioned, insecure and uncreative.

Prof. Toynbee analyses the causes of the growth and disintegration of civilizations. Why do civilizations break down, disintegrate and finally dissolve? In the growth phase the civilization successfully responds to a series of new challenges but while it disintegrates it fails to respond. A growing civilization is a unity. Here the minority is creative and it can very successfully meet the challenges of time. Again it unfolds its dominant potentialities which are different in different civilizations. But during disintegration "the nature of the breakdowns can be summed up in three points: a failure of creative power in the minority, an answering withdrawal of mimesis on the part of the majority and a consequent loss of social unity in the society as a whole." (See Toynbee) *A study of History*, IV, P. 6.

The question naturally arises: What next? When civilizations have died or are dying what emerges next. Toynbee says that the

successive rises and falls of civilizations are means for the growth of religion. In *Civilization on trial* he asserts that "Successive civilizations become a sort of stepping stone to higher things on the religions plane." Civilizations rise and fall. New civilizations may come but they are all means to an end. The end is the upward movement of religion. Toynbee contends that the movements of civilization may be cyclic but the movement of religion is on a single continuous upward level. Religion is served and promoted in its Heavenwardly progress by the cycles of births and deaths of civilization. But what religion? Here Toynbee appears to be dogmatic in his views. He is of the opinion that Christianity appears to be the final goal of human history. It is the highest measure of man's greatest good on earth. Total civilization turns into a creative theodicy. It seems strange that Prof. Toynbee at long last takes up the cause only of Christianity. There are other living faiths of mankind that can claim equal excellence and sublimity.

Oswald Spengler in his magnificent work—*Decline of the West*—starts with "cultures" as the prime phenomena of history. "Cultures are organisms and world history is their collected biography." (Vol I p. 104) They emerge, grow and die. When a culture dies down it enters into the last phase—civilization. Every culture has its own civilization and civilization is the inevitable destiny of a culture. Again civilizations are the artificial states of cultures.

"Every culture stands in a deeply symbolical, almost in a mystical, relation to the Extended, the space in which and through which it strives to actualise itself. The aim once attained—the idea, the entire content of inner possibilities, fulfilled and made externally actual—the culture suddenly hardens, it mortifies, its blood congeals, its force breaks down and it becomes civilization." (*Decline of the West*, vol I p. 106) The stage of civilization is marked by cosmopolitanism vs home; scientific irreligion or abstract dead metaphysics instead of the religion of the heart, cold matter-of factness vs. reverence and tradition and respect for age; international society instead of 'my country'; mass instead of folk and sex in place of motherhood. (See Sorokin, *Social Philosophies of an age of Crisis*, p. 78.)

Gradually the civilization becomes weary and cold. During this time, Spengler contends, comes the spell of second religiosity. New religious movements crop up, waves of mysticism, theology, astrology and various religions cults flood the country and its people. But is this

the end ? Spengler thinks that it is the 'finis' of culture but he is also inclined to believe that the second religiosity may be the harbinger of a new culture. Spengler does not show us a clear picture. But one thing is certain. The new culture, as Sorokin suggests, will be 'religiously ideational'.

Schweitzer too has his own views regarding the future of civilization. He is more concerned with ethics than with religion. Civilization realizes itself in moral control over man's dispositions. Schweitzer opines that science has given us power to control physical nature and its forces but has it given us the power to control human nature ? The latter is more essential than the former so far as the progress of civilization is concerned. He also thinks that the modern western civilization is decaying because its ethical foundation has collapsed. He however strikes a note of optimism when he says that the coming civilization will again be centred in ethics. He starts with the axiom of will to live and deduces a detailed ethics of life-affirmation, love and altruism.

Thus we see that the social philosophers, mentioned above, believe in religion and ethics as dominant factors in the coming civilization.

But Russell thinks that the feeling of utter discouragement due to the mis-use of science and technology has driven a few (Jeans, Eddington and biological theologians) to assert that science should abdicate before what is called religious consciousness. "In the name of science we revolutionize industry, undermine family morals, enslave coloured races and skilfully exterminate each other with poison gases.

Some men of science do not altogether like these uses to which science is being put. In terror and dismay they shrink from the uncompromising pursuit of knowledge and try to find refuge in the superstitions of an earlier day" (B. Russell, *The Scientific Outlook*).

But is religion only a superstition ? Religion ruled before there was any science. When science came with its victories, it seemed as if the end of religion had come. But religion has survived many onslaughts from diverse quarters. Some psycho—analysts, Marxists and philosophers have cried it down. Lucretius holds that fear is the basis of religion. Freud would trace religion to sex instinct or some other desires. Again Marx would like to view religion as a resultant of class struggle. Such criticisms against religion centre round the idea that if the origin of religion can be shown to be

unworthy, religion itself becomes unworthy. But a little reflection would show that the idea is wrong. Religion has been a developing process and no such process can be understood only by its earliest stages. As the seed does not explain the tree, enumeration of some of the factors of religion does not explain it either. Value of religion lies in the whole. Religion could have been explained away, if man were a negation. Since man exists, religion also exists as one of his innermost natures.

But science has succeeded in creating in individuals what is called the scientific attitude. It is the critical attitude with a view to knowing. Again it is disinterested. Prejudices, unconfirmed traditions and preconceived notions have no place in it. The scientific temper, as some call it, is characterised by a sort of openness of mind, accepting only such things as can pass the tests. Scientific method consists in observing significant facts, framing a suitable hypothesis and testing the deductions of the hypothesis. No scientist does claim absolute certainty. Only he asserts that scientific theories are leading towards it. The most significant characteristic of the scientific temper lies in not accepting tradition or authority blindly. Liberal education generates in the individual the true scientific temper. As people of the world are receiving liberal education, they are unwilling to accept authority uncritically. Liberally educated persons are discarding the irrational excrescences of religion. The more the spread of liberal education, the better is the understanding of religion. The traditional aspect of religion is fast dying out as it fails to satisfy the requirements of the scientific temper. The priest class, the churches, mosques and temples have been losing their original authoritative values. People have been meeting in religious places more for social values than for religious ones. Today the religious fervour for churches and temples has chiefly been confined to the rather uneducated folk. The priest class has a sway over them and subjects them to tyranny in the name of religion. In all societies liberally educated persons have refused to obey the irrational command of the priest class. By so doing people are not becoming anti-religious ; only they are becoming anti-traditional. Many a religious rite has been found to be the manoeuvring of the priests in their own interest. Religion of the future will have no traditional element in it. The church, the mosque or the temple with its mass of hitherto unchallenged traditions will melt away before the glare of the scientific temper.

Such elements of religion will endure as pass the rational requirements imposed by the scientific temper.

Man is not satisfied with his present. He wants to probe into the future. In him exists a tension between the present and the future. He does not feel secure unless he experiences a sense of dependence on the Infinite with whom he likes to enter into a personal relationship. Man is aware of his imperfection, incompleteness and finitude. This is why he seeks God who is to him perfect, complete and infinite. A true scientist knows that as a finite being he cannot know the full Reality. But he believes that there exists the full Reality, the Complete Truth on whom he depends. This belief and sense of dependence constitute his religion. The irreducible minimum of any religion is the belief in a perfect Reality and the sense of dependence on Him.

The future religion, as facts indicate, will be the religion of 'eaches'. Each man or woman will follow religion in his or her own way. The religion of 'eaches' will be unique in the sense that the individual will establish a personal relationship with God in his own manner. No accepted ritual, no traditional way of worship, no prescribed dogma will circumscribe him to this or that pattern of religion. Does it then mean that Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and Buddhism will all vanish? These faiths are not going to die out. People will continue to call themselves Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists and Christians but they will not care to follow the traditional aspects of their respective religions. The main causes of religious intolerance have been the contrary or even the contradictory traditions of various religions. Religion of 'eaches' being traditionless is expected to foster true religious toleration.

Religion of 'eaches' does not tend to be what is commonly called a universal religion. Religion is universal but a universal religion is only a utopia. Religion is man's private and individual affair and in this sense it is unique. It is hardly believable that mankind will ever agree to follow a universal religion. Broadly speaking, individuals will come under various religious groups or types but within the same group or type each man's religious reactions will be different from others.

Some thinkers are of opinion that the future religion will be of the mystic variety. At all places and times, there have been mystics and their number is only few. But it cannot be expected

that the vast majority of people will all turn mystics. When we talk of future religion we have in view only the general mass. Again religion of 'eaches' does not negate the religion of mystics. A mystic does not abide by the traditional aspect of religion. His chief endeavour lies in communion with God. A small section of people will always shine as mystics. A Ramakrishna, a Francis, a Chaitanya or a Boehme will ever adorn the spiritual gallery of mankind.

Baldly stated, religion of 'eaches' is the religion of the ethical-type people. Observance of ethical duties forms the most important characteristic of this religion. Religion is the moral law within us and God is the law-giver and Judge. One might suspect, religion of 'eaches' is only morality and no religion. Kant's religion was more morality than religion since he completely denied the feeling aspect of it. Kant argued that the religion of mere sentiment amounted to wild devotion and mysticism. To Kant, moral religion consisted in doing goodness, the will of God. It lay in following the commandments of reason. Religion of 'eaches' is not the cold, colourless performance of duties, dictated by reason. It is emotional-volitional. Also it is not without reason. Kant's ethical religion was the cold declaration of reason bereft of any emotion. Again he repudiated all communion with a super-natural God. But religion of 'eaches' tacitly believes in a God who is both in and beyond us and establishes an intimate personal relationship with Him.

Religion of 'eaches' recognizes in every individual, the Eternal Man. In this sense it is in affinity with the religion of man. Tagore's Religion of man centres round the basic idea—the idea of the humanity of our God or the divinity of man, the Eternal (See R.N. Tagore's *The Religion of Man*). Religion of 'eaches' and Religion of man declare that the individual exists for the Eternal and he must express Him in his thought, sentiment and action. To maintain true relationship with God is the most significant aspect of both the religions. When analysed this relationship is one of love with joy or love with awe. Perfection dwells eternally in God and every individual feels within him an urge to realise this ideal in his own unique way.

One might suspect, Is the 'Religion of eaches' a mere modified version of Comte's religion of humanity ? I would say a definite no. Comte believes in humanity as the chief object of worship. True piety, according to him, consists in having the thoughts, affections and

volitions ever bent on the preservation of humanity. His concept of humanity is very peculiar. "It is neither human nature nor the human race nor the aggregate of living men. It is said to be an organism of which individuals and generations, whether belonging to the past, present or future, are inseparable parts and yet it excludes multitudes of the human species. It does not comprehend savage and unprogressive peoples." 'Religion of eaches' would ask an individual to fulfil his ethical duties and his social duties to humanity but all his activities must be God-centred. Again Comte's religion is hide-bound by traditions and authorities. While Comte abandoned the principles of the Roman Catholic church, he retained many of its distinctive prejudices. He demanded that there should be salaried priests composed of positivist philosophers with a supreme Pontiff as their Head. In other words he built something like a positivistic orthodoxy.

Again 'Religion of eaches' need not be misunderstood as a clever device leading to some sort of opportunism. Though traditionless, yet it helps the individual to give full expression to his own religious consciousness. Each man feels that perfection as an ideal lies in front of him. Again perfection to him means the development of his own personality. Personality has two aspects, viz. the negative and the positive. In its negative aspect it is limited to individual separateness but in the positive aspect it extends itself in the whole. True personality is the positive personality. 'Religion of eaches' subordinates the brute nature of man to his eternal nature. As a means it is private and individual but its goal lies in selflessness and altruistic service.

A MODERN DEFENCE OF ORTHODOXY

DR. KALIDAS BHATTACHARYA

ORTHODOXY is not fanaticism. There is much indeed that is common to the orthodox and the fanatic, but there is a difference also. Though both stick to their points *unreasonably*, the orthodox is much less uncompromising than the fanatic. While the fanatic will not listen to others' arguments, the orthodox does. He not merely listens he is sometimes even prepared to concede. He readily sees through others' points of view and would often even admit that they are as strong as his, perhaps in some cases stronger. Yet, however, he would never give up his own point.

This does not mean that orthodoxy is spineless. If the strength of the fanatic lies in steadfast adherence, the orthodox does not, in this respect, lag behind. Concession is weakness only in the context of a rational duel. The orthodox may be called weak that way, but so far as acceptance on faith is concerned he is as resolute as the fanatic. He too would not budge an inch, even though he is conscious that his acceptance is wholly irrational. So far the orthodox, not denying reason, has yet kept it apart from blind acceptance.

The liberal, as distinguished from the fanatic and the orthodox, has an altogether different standpoint. He claims that his attitude is rational from the beginning to the end. Reason, he believes, is the sole guide of man, for reason alone takes us to truth. Blind acceptance may be a biological urge, but it is the prerogative of man to get over it and discover truths that are divine, and, when that discovery is made, to shape life accordingly. Biological urges are to be either rationalised or transcended altogether.

The thesis we shall develop in this paper is that if fanaticism is hellish, liberalism is Bohemian, an aimless nomadic life with no station to settle in. We shall conclude that orthodoxy is at least one best solution of the problem 'reason vs blind acceptance'.

That fanaticism is bad goes without saying. It is self-conscious surrender to unreason, which is as bad as desertion. Unreason by

itself is no enemy of man. But by deliberately walking over to its side and strengthening its hold the fanatic has virtually committed suicide. Man is superior to the animal only because he can wield reason. The animal does not reason self-consciously, but it has not also ostracised reason. The fanatic is in this respect worse than the animal.

Liberalism is the extreme opposite of fanaticism. The liberal would admit nothing that is not tested by reason. But he does not know the limitation of reason. The reason that he idolises is reason as *logic*, a principle that demonstrates or organises, not one that supplies data; if data are already there, reason can only confirm (or reject) them and seek to organise them into a coherent system. This implies that prior to the exercise of reason there must have been data which had not so far been accepted through reason. Total reliance on reason would thus yield nothing. It would be empty intellectual gymnastics, almost a useless hobby, to lead to nothing that is stable.

Physicists are the best known rationalists. But they too start with the data of unbiassed observation. These data they just accept. Even extreme physicists of modern times who propose to start with some postulates and construct their physics through logical and mathematical computations have ultimately to turn to facts of observation for verifying their theories; and these facts, whether started with or referred to at the end, are all data merely accepted, not got through reason. If it be urged that starting from certain postulates and with the help of logic and mathematics they had come to a rational picture of facts, so that the to-be-observed facts are already anticipated by reason, even then these scientists have allowed unreason in two ways. They have started with postulates which are initially unreason, and, secondly, the anticipated picture they are bound to correlate with merely observed facts which latter, as such, are blindly accepted.

It would be no use arguing that the postulates, though initially non-rational, are yet made rational because of the rational system built out of them. It would be equally useless to argue, on the other hand, that the observational facts, whether referred to at the end or started with, are facts of *unbiassed* observation, *unbiassed* meaning rationally chastened. Even granting that the pariah postulate has been Brahminised through its association with the Brahmin reason, we have not gained much. The entire rational system (including those postulates) that these scientists work out is no more than a nice possibility—a mere theory that has not yet attained the status

of *actuality*. That status it attains only when the theory is correlated with observable facts which are unreason. The observation that scientists speak of is indeed unbiassed i.e., chastened by reason. But chastened or not, it is still observation, not reason. Hence in order that scientific theories claim reality, observation, which is non-reason, has to be admitted.

Further, is there anywhere an absolutely chastened datum, a datum abstracted from all association? Physicists believe there are. Most of the things that commonly pass for data are indeed alloys, but they claim that through the chastening process of reason they can arrive at pure data. That may or may not be possible in physical sciences. But at least in biological and particularly in humanistic studies—we mean, in History, Ethics, Sociology, Politics, etc.—there is no such pure datum. The so-called *human* instincts are never pure data; they are necessary correlates of some relatively simple social patterns which themselves are human creations, however rudimentary, not parts of nature. Nor are mere animal instincts unalloyed data, for these too develop *pari passu*, and in organic connection, with specific animal groups which are not simple parts of nature. Even if these groups were the starting points, the corresponding animal instincts cannot adequately explain specific human instincts unless we have smuggled in a good amount of construction and interpretation. What modern novelists and psychologists call simple human relations are not most of them simple data.

At least with humanistic studies, then, the so-called data are already, to a large extent, prejudices that accumulated through countless pre-historic years. Liberals, therefore, cannot claim that they have stood aloof from all prejudices. If some prejudices they allow there is no *prima facie* reason why a few others should not be tolerated. Many of the prejudices accumulating in later historical years may have proved reactionary in our modern social set-up, and many again, unnecessary. For speedy progress in modern times these may have to be eliminated. But that does not speak for the elimination of all. Unnecessary institutions may sometimes be tolerated in the interest of decorum or as symbols of continuity with the past. They may even have some aesthetic value.

One cannot thus insist too much on simple chastened data. Three-fourths of our life are covered by data we have inherited from our fore-fathers. Reason organises them ceaselessly into evernew

patterns in response to social needs. These data, seldom unalloyed, constitute our solid anchorage. It is the stable ground of reality which maintains its identity in spite of, or even having engulfed, the changes forced upon it by social necessity. Reason, so far, is only the principle of organisation—ever a servant, never a master; and the servant should not be allowed to rule lest tradition might break, and with it might disappear all stability. Reason unbased on data moves among empty possibilities, and we are left at a loss to choose from among them.

Choice, we insist, does not depend on reason. It depends in the long run on facts. We have seen how physical sciences, with different postulates, come, through reason, to different alternative rational systems, or sometimes to a general system to be filled in by variables that are facts: Choice from among the alternative systems depends on correspondence with actual facts, and the filling in of the general system is possible only by such facts. Hence choice is determined by facts, reason having offered only alternatives that are equally tenable, or only a general possibility. 'Either-or' is the crucial problem solved only with reference to facts. Arjuna on the eve of the great epic war was faced with this *either-or* and Lord Krishna solved the problem by means of *svadharma* which is nothing but social heritage.

It cannot be held that reason itself is capable of solving the problem, having assessed the alternatives, one against another, and reaching a solution that way. Such assessment is impossible, for each system is based on a particular set of postulates which sets cannot be assessed against one another. There is no question of objective assessment of postulates. The value of a postulate lies in its capacity to construct a particular system. In plain language, every system is based on a fundamental ideology which is either a mere postulate, as in physical sciences, or accepted as real on mere faith, and therefore non-rational. The latter is particularly true in the case of humanistic studies.

It cannot be urged, again, that though reason unaided by facts cannot determine which alternative is real, reason aided by facts can do that. For, if reason unaided by facts cannot determine, and if the determination is possible only when that aid from facts is forthcoming, the only conclusion should be that the determination is made by facts.

Reason by itself, starting, of course, with some postulates, can offer, at the most, some equally tenable alternatives or only a highly generalised view, both of which are no more than good possibilities.

The same reason operating in the context of facts does nothing more than organise or rationalise—and in that way confirm or reject those facts. Of the liberals who propose to rely solely or chiefly on reason we ask one question—which of these two roles of reason do they prefer? If the former, they are only dallying with possibilities having nothing to fix upon—a sort of cheap romantic life bordering dangerously on the extreme of irrationality. This is why in the absence of a fixable tradition or institution they in spiritual despair often insist arbitrarily upon a form, more fanatically as a rule than one who is soberly orthodox; and the form they insist on is often found to be clannish. This shows that *cent per cent* rationalism is empty, futile and even self-defeating. It signalises decadence, rather than progress, and is bankrupt from the beginning to the end, unless replenished with a new type of content *viz.* the metaphysico-spiritual. But one who would go that way would be a philosopher in seclusion who would lose interest equally in all social groups and prefer neither iconoclasm nor formalities. They may, if they like, descend to our world of interests and aversions, but they would never act fanatically this way or that. They would, in other words, be neither fanatics nor liberals, but just the sober orthodox. They would ask people to remain in their fixed stations—their heritage—and yet understand others' points of view through reason. They would advise us to remain firm in our ideology and yet constantly compare it rationally with other ideologies. The idea is that each one's standpoint stands accepted and is so far nonrational, and yet as one among the many possibilities it requires rational substantiation, wherever possible. Everyone, though firmly placed in his standpoint, will yet defend it rationally as far as possible. His opponent too is in the same way firmly placed, and he too will have to substantiate his view rationally. *Sravana* has to be followed up by *manana*.

But why—it may be asked—should I have to substantiate my standpoint rather than refute it from the beginning or attempt a neutral assessment? In modern sociological and indological studies, particularly in our country, we often meet with the latter two attitudes. Either the age-long tradition is sought to be refuted from the beginning or a neutral assessment is attempted *de novo*. Why should not these attitudes be recommended?

We reply—we never start in vacuum. Every one of us begins with a heritage which is his proper self. We begin with identifying

ourselves with that heritage which is as much our own as our bodies and families. Naturally we should feel like defending, rather than disown it. Just as in social behaviours we cannot begin with internationalism, or even with nationalism, and just as there we start with real groups with which we somehow feel identified and gradually expand it, so is the case with the orthodox. The expansion of a real group into ideal ones like nation and the world-humanity never detracts from the solid base we started with. Such expansion is possible through duty whereby our rights which always remain ours come only to be enriched, never forfeited as in Socialist states. Duties have to be performed only in order that the rights of different individuals and real group may not clash. Duties are nothing but the principles of organising different rights and different sets of rights, they are not meant for doing away with the rights. Rights are ultimately the social heritage—a beautiful amalgam of nature and culture brought into existence by the non-rational historical force, and duties are the ways of organising different heritages. There is no question of either condemning heritage or starting *de novo*.

Duty corresponds to reason, and right to non-rational acceptance. As in the case of reason and non-reason, so here also duty only organises rights ; and as there so here also the organisation may be effected in three possible ways which are not, however, equally successful. One way of organisation which ordinarily passes for the only way, is to synthesise duty and right. But, historically, this synthesis has never been effected. Good people attempted it, but only to have ended in sacrificing one in the interest of the other. Hegel's social philosophy is a classical example in this regard—rights have been virtually sacrificed in the interest of an ideal group, viz. nation or state. The same example we find repeated in modern Russia. Wars and internal revolts are dialectical consequences of this state of affairs.

There is a second possible way of organising rights. One may concentrate on the principles of duty and discover through philosophical reflection the spiritual truths (*adhyatmikataṭṭva*) underlying them. Then, when these truths have been discovered, one may descend again to the rights and re-interpret, and therefore re-organise, them in the light of those truths. But this procedure is the privilege of only a few philosophers and not understood by the mass of mankind ; and what it ultimately aims at is only the replacement of common social

rights by rights that are spiritual, so that even here there is no question of doing away with rights altogether—there is only the replacement of some rights by others. Duties are indeed principles of rationalisation. But the spiritual truths underlying them are discovered not through reason, but through a type of intuition which, as such, is non-reason.

The best way of organising rights and different sets of rights has been formulated, though not adequately enough, in the modern doctrine of Peaceful Co-existence which, as will be seen immediately, is another name for orthodoxy. The idea is that I shall continue in my rights—I shall cling steadfastly to my heritage—and yet understand the possibility of other rights and heritages for other persons. The formulators of Peaceful Co-existence have so far correctly represented the doctrine of orthodoxy. But in their formulation there is a serious gap which has to be filled up. They have not seen that my heritage may be antagonistic to that of another, and they ought to show how there can be peaceful co-existence in such cases. In the very ideology of one there may be a necessary urge to engulf others. How possibly can there be peaceful co-existence of a proselytising religion with harmless religions, or of one proselytising religion with another? How can Communism with its inevitable international phase remain friendly to other social doctrines? How would Panditji keep the wolf and the lamb freely together?

The way we propose to fill up the gap is as follows; and that would go a long way to clarify the notion of orthodoxy.

There is distinction between two levels—the level of blind acceptance which is our actuality and the level of intellectual comparison and assessment which is only possibility as opposed to actuality. It is only at the level of intellectual possibility that we may remain friendly in spite of bitter theoretical opposition. We may constantly assess our ideologies and compare them, and each may defend his point and attack another. Yet all the wranglings are being enacted in the region of possibilities, as though on a stage. Such staging need not affect our actual life. At the stage-level I may be even defeated; yet I may well continue to have blind faith, at least for some time, in my heritage.

Two questions arise inevitably. One is—can we keep faith and reason in two airtight compartments for an indefinite period? The other question is—even granting that at the stage-level we remain

friendly in spite of wranglings, what about the level of actuality ? While friendly at the stage-level, will not the proselytising religion still continue proselytisation and, therefore, come in clash with another religion ?

There is a single reply to both the questions, and that reply constitutes the essence of orthodoxy. Reason and faith cannot remain separate for an indefinite period. Faith is blind acceptance, i.e. nature, and reason is logic. But there are two phases of nature through one of which reason has access to actuality. Nature is not mere acceptance. Along with blind acceptance there is always in nature a fear of loss, a fear another name of which is natural doubt. Along with my life as an accepted datum I have always a natural fear of death—a doubt I may not exist. Every acceptance is accompanied by this doubt. What reason does is either to remove or accentuate this doubt. Reason begins with siding with acceptance and its primary function is to remove the doubt. This is why at the stage-level of intellect everybody begins with defending his standpoint. If through intellectual discussions one succeeds in removing doubts concerning his accepted doctrines, the acceptance will be strengthened all the more. It may sometimes happen that at the stage-level one finds his own doctrine to be as irrefutable as another's. Even then the natural doubt is removed and there occurs nothing to dislodge him from his faith. This is always the case so far as fundamental ideologies are concerned. But often, again, it happens that at the stage-level my standpoint comes to be refuted by another, and the crux lies here.

In such a case not merely are natural doubts not removed, fresh doubts begin to infest our initial faith. Very soon that faith, far from being a comfortable resort, turns into a bed of thorns. The result is that the faith or actuality is now shaken at the foundation. Yet, however, we are not till now dislodged. How can we be, seeing that we must rest on something ? If on account of the increasing number of doubts and discomforts we give up our station, that means we are lost. The discomforts here are the pangs of a new birth, but the foetus is still in the mother's body. The light of the outside world has not yet dawned on it.

Even at this pre-conversion stage reason should, and actually does, struggle desperately to defend the old faith, though dialectically enough it puts forward for acceptance the other alternative with ever-increasing persuasion. Reason is dialectical only at such dynamic

pre-conversion stage ; otherwise it is a friend, philosopher and guide.

At the pre-conversion stage we still continue in the old faith, though with considerable hesitation. But sooner or later, supposing reason fails altogether to defend the old faith, the opposing faith rushes into the garrison of our actuality and swamps it. One fine morning we find ourselves converted. All pangs are gone. We feel installed once again in a peaceful atmosphere of stability, and life begins anew.

Thus, there is no compartmental separation of reason and faith. The role of reason in man's life never ceases and faith too is always there. Reason is a loyal sentry at the gate of faith, and yet the sentry has independent judgment. Reason is the judiciary which supports the laws of the state to the uttermost, but immediately as the support fails, it prescribes change of the law. It, however, only prescribes, not imposes, a new law. The new law must be coming from the legislators.

The answer to the question—how two opposing ideologies remain friendly at the level of actuality—follows automatically. If one of the contending parties cannot defend itself and is refuted by the other there will be automatic conversion, though after a period of confusion. Hatred is begotten of fanaticism. Orthodoxy always leaves open the door for conversion and yet keeps itself steadfastly attached to actuality. Liberalism is criminally unrealistic.

There are three stages in the life of the orthodox. First, the blessed stage of mere acceptance where Adam has not yet tasted the fruit called knowledge. The second is a more or less prolonged state where at the level of possibilities there is ceaseless evaluation of what was merely accepted. The career at this stage is chequered, confirmation alternating with refutation, where, again, if refutation gets the upper hand there follows a stage of painful insecurity. The third stage is one of recovery where the orthodox finds himself absolutely secure either in his old view or, if conversion has taken place, in another.

The fanatic has no need of these stages. The three stages are characteristically human, but he does not need them because he has strangled the man in him. We may add that even in this process of dehumanisation he is rarely successful. His life is tragic. Reason inhibited works in the sub-conscious mind, and the confirmed fanatic should be sent to an asylum.

The three stages through which the orthodox passes form a total healthy life. The liberal proposes to eliminate the third and revels in the second which is only the stage of preparation. The second stage is inevitably painful, though only as a means to the third which is stability. But somehow the romantic liberal enjoys it vicariously. Physical exercise is only a preparation for health, but to the gymnast it is of absolute value, and he finds pleasure in continuously straining himself. The liberal is a useless gymnast.

A NOTE ON THE CHARAK PUJA IN BENGAL ON THE BASIS OF ORIGINAL SOURCES

N. B. ROY

The Charak Puja, which is the worship of Hara and Gauri in their respective symbols, is an important feature of Hindu religious life in Bengal. To this day it is celebrated annually at the end of the month of *Chaitra*. Saffron-robed sannyasi's, with long matted hair, bodies smeared with ashes, trek singing and dancing from village to village. During the consecrated period which lasts for seven to ten days or even for a month, they live on scanty diet, and abstain from indulgences. The outstanding feature of this worship is the erection of Charak, derived presumably from the Sanskrit word, *Chakra* (wheel). This *Chakra* is formed by two crosspoles, a vertical one usually planted in the ground in an open space in front of the village shrine of Siva, the other a horizontal pole, and as one end is pulled, the man suspended from it by a hook piercing his muscle swings in the air. The worship is solemnised by practices, such as walking over burning firewood, and cutting part of the tongue.¹ Such spectacles, especially, human figures hanging and revolving in the air, used to attract hundreds and thousands of spectators.

The introduction of this upright post in Saiva worship is shrouded in obscurity. The pilgrim Hiuen Tsang refers to a column in the middle of the river at Prayag. At sunrise a class of persons climbed it up and clung to it with arms and one leg until the sun went down. Whether it was² a column dedicated to the Sun-God or Siva is not known. It is however known that the identity of Sun-God with Siva was established by the 8th century A. D.³

The brahmanical religion is hieratic in character. The Siva, as represented by *Chakra*, is, on the other hand, a popular cult. The Siva worship takes place in a shrine tucked away at a corner of

1. For details vide document No. 3

2. Beale—Life of Hiuen Tsang, 234.

3. Indian Historical Quarterly, 1948, 143.

the village, and mostly the under-dogs of the Hindu society,—ploughmen, milkmen, sweepers and so on—formed the bulk of the worshippers. They were drawn to this form of worship by two considerations. Firstly, they were the have-nots who eked out a precarious existence. There were only a few occasions in the year when the high-ups of the Hindu society condescended to open their purse-strings and indulged in large expenditure. The lower class took advantage of these festivals to supplement their pitifully small income. This adoption of the ascetic robe by them and austere living during the month of *Chaitra* was a distinguishing feature of the *Charak Puja*. The God Mahadeva was the archetype of an ascetic, without any covering on his body except the ornament of snakes. The votary who was naturally inclined to follow his example was strengthened in his purpose by the very captivating appeal of *Tāpas* (asceticism). According to Hindu scripture, it endowed man with supernatural power, the power to transcend all limitations. As the *Manusamhita* says,

Whatever is hard to be traversed, whatever is hard
to be attained, whatever is hard to be reached,
whatever is hard to be performed—all may be accomplished by
austerities.¹

Moreover, in Hindu notion, the ascetic was casteless. He stood not below caste, but above caste. By adoption of the ascetic robe and austere living during the consecrated period of seven, ten or thirty days preceding the final day of the worship, the ascetic transcended the mean restraints imposed on him by the Hindu society. Socially he was an untouchable, economically a serf. He must have unconsciously felt a sense of exhilaration when by the adoption of the ascetic robe he escaped the ignominy of the existing Caste system.

Lately I chanced upon a couple of documents on the *Charak Puja* in the West Bengal Govt. Archives, alongwith two other documents, one representing the Christian efforts to suppress it, and the other containing the reaction of the public opinion of the time about this religious practice.

These documents make interesting reading. They reveal the state of contemporary Hindu society, the overpowering might of

1. Sacred Books of the East, 25 478.

यद्दुस्तरं यद्दुरापं यद्दुर्गं यश्च दुस्करम् ।

सर्वन्तु तपसा साध्यं तपो हि दुरतिक्रमम् ॥

Manusamhita, ed. by Jogendranth Vidyaratna, chah. II

the landed gentry and their strong support of the cruel practice. Prompted by orthodox religious belief as well as consideration of secular interest, two powerful landlords, one Rajendra Mohan Tagore owning estates in seventeen districts of Bengal, and another Raja Baroda Kant Roy, of Sayyidpur (Narail ?) in Jessore district, defeated the attempt of Francis L. Beaufort, the magistrate of Jessore in putting down the cruelties attending the Charak worship. The humanitarian effort of the Christian missionaries, directed at raising the standard of our social life is disclosed in another document, while the contemporary public opinion on the Charak Puja is reflected in the fourth. These documents may therefore be deemed to be of some importance in the socio-religious life of the 19th century Bengal.

As there prevails want of adequate knowledge on this curious form of Saivism, an account of the origin of this faith and some interesting features connected with the celebration of this worship is outlined here, so that it might serve as a suitable introduction to the documents appended.

I

The origin of the Charak Puja is lost in obscurity. The root principle of it goes back to that dim antiquity when the concept of a sexual dualism was originated to account for the mysterious origin and existence of the universe. At what epoch these ideas crystallized into religious belief and found shape in concrete manifestation, it is difficult to ascertain. The Mahabharata is the earliest literary source which contains an account of the origin of the phallus and the female counterpart. According to a story, early in his life Upamanyu began meditating upon Siva and after a thousand years had passed, Siva was attracted by his devotion to appear before him in the form of Indra and offer him the dominion over three worlds. Upamanyu, however rejected his favour and avowed his unwavering faith in Siva. He declared that he would rather be born an insect, a fly or even a dog, if Maheswara desired, rather than accept from Indra the dominion of the world. On that occasion he described Siva as having been the primordial source of all things that exist in the universe and alluded to his androgynous character in the words—

प्रत्यक्षमिह देवेन्द्र पश्य लिंगं भगाङ्कितम् ।

देवदेवेन रुद्रेण सृष्टिसंहारहेतुना ॥

Oh the king of Gods; look at this phallus
set inside the emblem of female organ.
Rudra, the God of Gods, is the cause of preservation
and destruction.

पुँलिंगं सर्वमोशनं स्त्रीलिंगं विद्धि चाप्युमाम् ।
द्वाभ्यां तनुभ्यां व्याप्तं हि चराचरमिदं जगत् ॥

Know that all males represent Siva,¹ females Umā. Their body pervades the whole universe.

Ever since that time, Siva worship in this peculiarly blended form has acquired vogue, though the phallic emblem and the female organ of the mother goddess are said to date from the prehistoric epoch of Mohenjodaro civilization. The earliest anthropomorphic representation of Siva-Parvati occurs in a coin of Huvishka (2nd C. A. D.) where a female figure read as OMMO (by Rapson) stands face with Siva with a lotus in her hand.²

II

Self-immolation, considered by the Hindu as a means of earning beatitude, is older than his civilization, dating from the time of the Mohenjodaro. A figure with divine aureole is depicted in plate XII of Sir John Marshall's '*Mohenjo-Daro and the Indus civilization.*' In front of this deity is a human figure with bended knees and folded palm whom another person with upraised arm is about to strike from behind. Human sacrifice is alluded to in the *Satapatha Brahmana*.³ Reference to Siva ascetics having spilled blood from out of their person occurs in the *Markandeya Purana*,⁴ (4th century A. D.). Bana in his *Harsa-charita* refers to a Dravidian offering his skull to propitiate a god, and others pacifying Māhākala by holding melting

1. Indian Historical Quarterly, 1948, 268 f.
2. Dr. J. N. Banerji—Development of Hindu Iconography., 1st. edn. 1970
3. E. W. Hopkins—The Religions of India, 198
4. Markandeya Purana, ed. by Panchanan Tarkaratna Bangabasi Edn.

निराहारौ यताहारौ तन्मनस्कौ समाहितौ ।
ददतुस्तौ वलिश्चैव निजगात्रासुगुक्षितम् ॥

gums on their head, and offering an oblation of flesh from their own body. Human flesh was put up for sale in the streets of Thaneshwar evidently for conciliating malevolent spirits for the recovery of king, Prabhākarabardhan.¹ Hiuen Tsang saw heaps of bones lying in front of the large tree (Akshayavata ?) in front of the Deva temple in the city of Prayag (mod. Allahabad).² An epigraphic record of the 13th century discovered in the Andhra-desa refers to ten Virabhadras having mutilated their body by ripping their bowels open, and cutting off their heads.³

Pallava sculptures in the temple at Mamallapuram and Pullamangai illustrate head-offering to the Goddess Durga. In one of them the devotee is depicted in the posture of severing his own head, in another the votary cuts out a piece of flesh from his thigh.⁴ A class of Siva worshippers named Kongu Viras made an offering of their head and tongue to the deity residing at Sri Sailam. Under king Krisnadeva Roy of Vijaynagar, Santalinga, a Virasaiva is stated to have decapitated a large body of Svetambar Jains for offering to Siva.⁵ Human sacrifice as a religious practice prevailed under the Muslim rule and is referred to by Mashin Fani in his *Dabistan*. Referring to the Agama (Sakti worship) he says that this cultur esteemed human sacrifice (narmedha) meritorious and mentions one Visnunath of Orissa having offered before year human beings before his tutelary Deity, Durga.⁶

Ruparam Chakravartty's *Dharmamangal*⁷ (composed in 1649-50 A. D.) is however the earliest authentic literary source in Bengali which describes the self-mortification of queen Ranjābati, for winning the favour of *Dharmathakur* identical with the Supreme Godhead. Ruparam describes in a string of sonorous verses the ordeals of the

1. E. B. Cowell—Harsa Charita, 138
2. Beale—Life of Hiuen Tsang, 232
3. N. K. Shastri—Historical Sketch of Saivism in the Cultural Heritage of India, II
4. C. Minakshi—Administration and Social life under the Pallavas, Chap IX, 182-84
5. Ibid,
6. Shea and Troyer—Dabistan, 156-162
7. Ruparamer Dharmamangal, edited by Dr. Sukumar Sen and Panchanan Mondal, 1951

queen. It is a revealing account, exposing the cruelties of the contemporary religious practice.

The queen Ranjābati first laid offering at the feet of *Dharma*. She then took a dip in the waters of the Champak (Chapar) river, and subsequently performed the harrowing rites on her bank.

The scene opens with ordeal of the spike :

"The spike was glowing like a tongue of fire, keen as the diamond's edge

She drove it into her breast and broke it to pieces.

The spike, sharp and crescent shaped, was laid in front

And on it the queen threw herself.

Lifting both arms, she flung herself upon it,

And softly intoned the words, "Hail *Dharma*".

The whole day she indulged in this type of self-torture,

And fainted by the practice of ordeal in the fire.

The scene shifts, as the queen walks over the fire.

She moved forward and backward over a length of twenty yards,

On which the embers of firewood gleamed like the lightning flash.

With a halter round her neck, and fetters round her feet,

And iron chains in the wrist, she walked gently over it.

The sannyasi and the devotees standing in two rows shouted
the name of Hari,

As she walked across the fire, and begged the boon of a son.

Then followed the ordeal of nail-driving :

On two sides of her breast, she drove nails with strings attached
to them

With folded palm the daughter of the king paced forward and
backward,

The maid Samulā raised frequent exclamations of joy,

The sannyasis and the devotees were dumb with fear and wept. Then
followed a more fearful ordeal which is described in the following words:

The beautiful queen lighted up the fire-pan on her head

And tears of joy rolled down her face, glittering like gold,

The pan burnt without a flicker on her head,

And the sparks flew about her body.

Still worse an ordeal followed.

With her own hand she cut off her tongue and laid it on the
plantain leaf.

With the marrow of her own head, she lighted up the wicklamp.
There were many men practising austerities on the bank of the
Champaka.

By the grace of the primordial deity, Ruparam composed the songs.
These pitiful ordeals, did not move the whimsical God. So the
queen submitted to a voluntary crucifixion which is thus described
by Ruparam.

She first daubed the Shāl (a piece of wood) with vermilion paint,
sprinkled it with China rose and then turning eastward offered libation
to it.

"The nail struck her in the chest and pierced her through and
through,

She was torn savagely and all hope of her life was gone.

Blood gushed out of the nose and the mouth and swathed her
body,

In this dying state she prayed for a male child.

Her body was pierced through and through and blood flowed
copiously,

The maid Samula raised shouts of joy—

Kalyani poured the Ganges water into her mouth,

Motionless she lay prostrate on the Shāl,

The sannyasi and devotees standing by cried out the name of
Hari.

The burning faith of Ranjabati delighted Dharma who conferred upon
her the boon of a male child.¹

The Dharmamangal of Sahadeva Chakravartty, (mid. 18th century
testifies to a human sacrifice having been offered in his)time which
is attested by the following two lines.

Mahārāja Harochandra performed the worship with great delight
And offered the head of his own son as sacrifice

His queen Madana shed not a drop of tear.

Certain verses in the *Kavikankan Chandi*² are referred to by
late Jogesh Chandra Roy as testifying to the practice of mutilation of

1. Ruparamer Dharmamangal, 92-94, Jadunather Dharma Purana
edited by Panchan Mandal (now in printing) also refers to
the austerities in connexion with the Dharma cult. His des-
cription is overdrawn, nevertheless contains a stratum of truth.
2. Sahitya Parisat Patrika, 1304, 1316, p. 214.

limbs on the occasion of the *Charak Puja* in the month of Chaitra.

“With much ado, the worship was performed in the month of Chaitra.

Trumpets sounded and drums throbbed in the temple of Siva, They bored and cut off their tongue and swang on the pole”.¹

Jean Baptiste Tavernier who visited Maldah in April, 1676, recorded the following account of the practice of hook-swinging, as observed by him in that town. “The eighth of April, being in a city of Bangala called Malde, the idolaters made a great feat, according to the particular custome of that place ; they all go out of the city, and fasten iron hooks to the boughs of several trees, then come a great number of poor people and hang themselves, some by the sides, some by the brawn of their backs, upon those hooks, till the weight of their body tearing away the flesh, they fall of themselves. 'Tis a wonderful thing to see that not so much as one drop of blood should issue, from the wounded flesh, nor that any of the flesh should be left upon the hook ; besides, that in two days they are perfectly cured by such plasters as their brahmin give them. There are others who at that feat will lie upon a bed of nails, with the points upward, the nails entering a good way into the flesh ; however while these people are under this penance, their friends come and present them with money and linen”²

In the 19th century the austerities voluntarily undergone by the sannyasis surpassed belief. An eye-witness wrote in 1823 that “not only was the tongue bored, but an iron-rod was passed through it.” Another sannyasi, who had bored his tongue, had the point of a bayonet fixed to a musket passed through it. A sepoy, holding the bayonet with the musket, led him in a procession along a Calcutta street. Another person had “the tail end of a live snake, 5 or 6 ft. in length, thrust across his tongue.” The head and a part of the snake's body, it is narrated twirled in frightful shape above the sannyasi's head.³ As Siva draped himself in snakes, his votary mimicked his tutelary deity by

1. Sahitya Parisat Patrika, 1316, p. 216

2. Tavernier's Travels, Bangabasi edn, 434.

3. J. Pegg 'India's Cries to Humanity,' 353 Quoted from Heber's Journal.

keeping a snake at play from his mouth. In 1827 a body of sannyāsis at Sibpur on the outskirts of Howrah mangled their body with deep wounds and typified Siva, the God of destruction.¹

In the same year a non-Bengali won publicity by cutting off his tongue with a knife before the Goddess Kali in the temple of Kali-ghat.² The fall from swing and consequent death was a common incident. In 1837 a sannyasi was cast off at a distance of 50 ft from the pole when the cord gave way. The incident occurred in the premises of one Radhakant Munshi of Entally, Calcutta.³

III

The Mahabharata describes Siva as fond of music and dance and assigns to him the epithets of *Nrittapriya*, *Narttaka* *Nartana Silaya*, *Gitavaditrapalina*. Dharmasamhita, a religious text composed around the 12th century A. D., describes Siva, God of the Gods, as having had dalliance with the heavenly nymphs who personified Gauri and her bevy of maidens and completely deluded the great God, as attested by the following verses rendered here into English.

"Having said so Rudra left the bed and proceeded seven steps in front to greet Gauri. The maids had assumed false guise, and began singing and dancing by the name of Rudra. Some of them tripped, some glided with rhythmic steps, while others jested and laughed. Siva thought to himself "Is she Parvati?" All were amazed at the 'sight of two Gauris.'⁴ Siva's amours with the nymphs, though done in delusion, were sometimes imitated by his votaries in the 19th century.

In Calcutta in 1829 a scandalous affair occurred. The groom of a horse and a woman clasped each other in a lewd posture⁵ and swang

1. Ditto.—340 Quoted from a Bengali periodical 'Timir Nasak'.

2. B. N. Banerji—Sambad Patre Shekaler Katha, III, 139

3. " " " " " " II 378

एवमुक्तस्तथा रुद्रस्त्यक्त्वा शयान्तु हृष्टवत् ।
 पुरस्तान्निर्ययौ गौर्याः शनैः सप्त पदानि तु ॥
 रुद्रं गायन्ति नृत्यन्ति सर्वाः कपटमातरः ।
 काश्चित् गायन्ति नृत्यन्ति रमयन्ति हसन्ति च ॥
 किमियं पार्वती देवी किमियमित्यचिन्तयन् ।
 तां दृष्ट्वा चकिताः सर्वे किमियं वा सुशोभना ॥

4. Quoted from Sahitya Parisat Patrika, 1316, 41.

5. It is suggested that this was the Yogi's Yuganadha Asana. How Yoga was prostituted for immoral purpose is clear.

from the *Charak*, before a body of thirty thousand spectators.¹ In 1829 a *sannyasi* who had passed in iron-rod, through his tongue attached it by a cord to the feet of a public woman and was paraded in a chair along the street of Calcutta by a group of bearers.²

That religion encouraged indecency and immorality, and that public taste had degenerated to such a low level only a hundred years ago would hardly be believed. Hinduism had propounded great spiritual truths, but its rituals became associated with debased practices. Hinduism proclaimed the divinity of man, but countless of its followers ranked as pariahs. In India as elsewhere, clerics used religion for the furtherance of their class interest and obscured the light of truth from the view of common men.

In the latter days of the Roman Commonwealth and under the empire, the worship of certain gods and goddesses, such as Ma, Cybele and Adonis, was celebrated by the sprinkling of blood, and mutilation of limbs. During the worship of Ma, the priests danced dizzily to the sound of trumpets and drums, slashed themselves with knives and sprinkled the Goddess and her devotees with blood, while at the spring festival of Cybele, her votaries fasted, prayed and mourned the death of her consort, Attis. An important part of the ceremony consisted in the mutilation by the priests of their own arms and drinking their own blood. The finale of the worship was the ceremonial procession by which the image of the Great Mother was carried in triumph through crowds lustily shouting 'Nostra Domina' (Our Lady)³ Roman races and combat which were attended by carnage and cruelties, were sanctified by rituals. They commenced only after the sacrifice had been publicly offered, and the hour found propitious. The images of God and the effigies of the deceased emperors were borne on high in procession down from the Capitol through the Forum into the circus in which the presiding magistrate formed the van, while the rear was brought up by the priests, ministrants and performers. A philosopher like Seneca, however, condemned this shedding of blood in no uncertain terms.

"There was nothing so detrimental to character as to attend a public entertainment. For there under the guise of pleasure, vice the

1. Op. cit. Sambad Patre Shekaler Katha, II.

2. Pegg, Op. cit 353

3. Vide Appended Document, no 4.

more easily creeps in. You wonder what I mean. I mean that I come back the greedier, the more grasping, the more wanton, worse still the more cruel and inhuman, because I have mixed with my fellowmen."

Senseless self-tortures and profane practices enacted in connexion with the *Charak* would now shock any member of the Hindu community. They were however viewed with complacency by the Hindu *elite* as late as 1850. Rai Kishorichand Mitra and Gopaldas Mitra, both holding the office of deputy magistrate could not give their full support to the proposal for the suppression of the inhuman rite in 1849. According to Babu Gopaldas Mitra,

"The suppression of swinging would be beneficial to the country but the entire suppression of the *Charak* Puja would be regarded with great dissatisfaction by the Hindu community and would hurt their feelings."¹

It would be easy to understand how the Jessore Magistrate, Francis Beaufort was defeated in his attempt to suppress swinging within his jurisdiction. The Magistrate had issued a proclamation banning swinging and in spite of it, when the *Charak* was set up at Swaruppur, he had Nilmoni Mukherji, the local naib of the zamindar Rajendra mahan Tagore, prosecuted and sentenced to imprisonment for 15 days. But later on the magistrate was censured by the Lieutenant Governor.

In the middle of the 19th century, the Christian missionaries were active in the cause of their faith in India. Prompted by evangelical and humanitarian motives, they carried on an active propaganda through the press and the platform for abolition of the cruelties connected with hook-swinging. They met in a conference at Calcutta in 1856 and forwarded a memorial to the Government for a legislative ban upon these cruelties (*Vide Document No. III*). Accordingly the government sought to elicit public opinion through certain commissioners and the superintendents of police. The report appended to this paper (*Document No. 4*) testifies to the hold of this practice upon the affection of the people of Bengal.

"The people flock to witness the scene," writes Mr. Dampier, "as the people of England gather to see a man ascend on horseback with a balloon or the Italian brothers go up suspended by their feet to the balloon car".

1. *Vide Appended Document, 4.*

Hence non-interference with the religious prejudices and observances of the people was the opinion that prevailed. Mr. Allen, Commissioner of Chotanagpur, expressed the view that "the matter be left to the influence of the school-master, rather than to any act of the legislature" (*Document No. 4*). Accordingly Lord Stanley, Secretary of State for India, declared in March 1869 with reference to the petitions of the Christian Missionaries forwarded to him that His Majesty's Government "would leave the remedy, as suggested by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, to the progress of education and its legitimate effects"¹

Four years later, in 1863 A. D., hook-swinging was declared illegal by a statute. The practice, however, continued. In a circular letter issued on the 15th March, 1865, Sir Cecil Beadon required the District Magistrates "to direct any person to abstain from the act of hook-swinging or other self-torture in public or from the abetment thereof."

This directive was efficacious in stopping hook-swinging in the city of Calcutta, but three instances were reported to have occurred in the suburbs of the city in 1865²

During the administration of William Grey, 1867-1871,³ hook-swinging was reported to have taken place in Dacca and Midnapore districts.

But not long before the propagation of western ideas through the new institutions set up in the country, especially colleges and universities caused a revolutionary change in the tastes and temper of the people. The political life of England during the same epoch was leavened with a new spirit by such great men, as Cobden, Bright and Gladstone, while the new theories of social reconstruction propagated by Herbert Spencer, Mill and Carlyle revolutionized the English social life. As these ideas permeated through the medium of educational institutions, press and the apparatus of administration established in this country, the intellectual *elite* became increasingly conscious of the deficiencies in our social life and the great contrast between the western liberal thought and the obscurantist ideas and prejudices of our own people. This quickening of the conscience

1. Charles Ball—Indian Mutiny, 694

2. C. E. Buckland—Bengal under the Lieutenant Governors, 312-13

3. Do " " 438

resulted in a movement for the regeneration of the intellectual and moral life of the country.

During the last hundred years India has changed beyond recognition. This radical change was brought about as much by Governmental interference with our social practices as by a process of liberal western education, consequent spiritual refinement, and rediscovery of our cultural heritage. The word '*Charak*' now reverberates a distant echo in the urban areas. It lingers only in the comparatively backward rural areas. People still make bonfire on the *Charak Puja* day and walk gaily over embers of fire-wood. They still lie prostrate, if not transfix themselves, on the nails. The curious practice of Siva playing hide-and-seek yet survives. On the night preceding the final solemnisation of worship, he is brought out from undesirable places by his votaries and put up for worship in front of the shrine. W. E. H. Lecky in his well-known book—'*The Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe*'—remarks that the British people's attitude towards awarding severe punishment for petty offence was softened by the march of philanthropy "which" according to him "is to our age what asceticism was to the middle ages and polemical discussion was to the 16th and the 17th centuries." In India, on the other hand, the eradication of social abuses was due to the refinement of the public taste by the spread of western education reinforced by the introduction of western institutions and the rebirth of a new culture.

CHARAK PUJA

Document No. I

Document No. I Petition of Rajendra Mohan Tagore, Zamindar of Dihi Sorrupore and Dihi-Kenujpore, in the Zillahs of Nadea and Jessore, 23rd August, 1849.
No. 102.

To

The President of the Council of India in Council.

That your petitioner having through the person of his old and faithful servant Nilmony Mookerjee been deeply aggrieved and disgraced by the harsh and illegal proceedings of Francis L. Beaufort, Magistrate of Jessore, and having met with no redress from the Judge of the district, begs to lay before your Honour this appeal. On the 29th of March last (1849) F. L. Beaufort passed Roobcaree¹ of the Faujdaree Court, directing that Perwannahs should be

1. Roubkari—Warrant.

issued to the Thanadars and Mohurrers of all Pharees of Police stations under the jurisdiction ordering them to issue within their respective sections, proclamations prohibiting any person from swinging on **Charak** on the occasion of the approaching Dewali Puja² and further directing that all persons offending against such proclamation should be apprehended and brought before the Magistrate. That in pursuance of such Roobcaree Ganga Charan Roy Muhurrer of Thana Kotchandpore³ on the fourteenth of April last made a report to the effect, that upon information that Nilmony Mukherjee, the Naib of the Cutchery of Talook Surroppore had caused men to be swung on a **charak**, the said Muharrer had ineffectually endeavoured to have the said Nilmony Mukherjee apprehended and failing therein had taken the deposition of the witnesses named in the margin to the effect that several persons specially named had on the day of the Dewali Poojah suffered themselves to be swung on the **Charak**, and that this had been done in the presence of the said Nilmony Mukherjee, wherefore the said Mohurrer reported the said Nilmony Mukherjee as guilty of disrespect to the Magistrate's orders and sent up the witnesses Sreekantha Ghose, Gopal Ghose, Zemiruddin, Bhayajee and Ramchand Ghose for examination. Upon this report the Magistrate ordered that the Deputy Magistrate should take down the deposition of the last named witness, and that the Darogah should summon the alleged offenders to appear before the Magistrate.

That the witnesses were examined on the 19th April and deposed to the fact of several persons having voluntarily swung on the **Charak**, but unanimously declared that the Naib Nilmony Mukherjee was not present during the swinging, and that they were ignorant of any order having been issued prohibiting the ceremony of swinging. That on the twenty first of April last Naib Nilmony Mukherjee appeared before the Magistrate and being charged with having caused Sunnasies or devotees to be swung on the **Charak** * * pleaded that he was not present, having gone home to consecrate some water pots before the Poojah and not returned to the village where the **Charak** was swung, i.e. until two or three days after the Poojah. And further that no prohibitory proclamation had been published, whereupon the Naib was bound over in his recognisance of one hundred Rupees to remain in attendance at the Magistrate's Court.

That on the twenty-eighth of April Serferaz Khan, Dhoonjee Sirdar, Torep Peadah, Dodbee Mahammed and Mookin Chowkidar were examined as witness on behalf of the Naib and deposed to the facts of his absence from village where the Charrack was swung on the date of the celebration of the Dewali Poojah and their ignorance of any prohibitory orders having been published previous to that date. That after the depositions taken on the twenty-eighth of April, the further hearing of the case was adjourned for the production of the Daroga to prove the facts of the publication of the prohibitory order and the Naib Nilmony Mukherjee bound over in his recognizance of one hundred Rupees, and the other defendants in their respective recognizances of fifty rupees to remain in attendance at the Magistrate's court.

2. Diwali—Evidently refers to the worship of Siva and Parbati and not the Festival of Light in autumn.

3. Kotchandpur—a well known mart in Jessore district, situated at the junction of the Bhairab and the Kapdak (Kapotaksha).

That on the thirtieth of April two more witnesses were examined and an order was made that the Darogah should report how the proclamation had been published.

That on the sixth of May the Darogah made his report in which it was stated that the prohibitory proclamation had been duly promulgated by beat of tomtom in the Bazar of Sorupore and also by Hussain Buksh in the Bazar of Taherpore. The Darogah also sent up three witnesses to depose to the facts. That on the ninth and tenth of May the Darogah's witnesses were examined who deposed merely to the fact of the proclamation having been made in the Bazar of Chandpore, a village four miles distant from Surroppore five or six days before the Dewali Poojah.

That the Darogah having reported that the proclamation was duly made in the Bazar of Teherpore¹ through the men whom he sent up to give evidence, the witnesses were examined on the Seventeenth May. They directly disprove the assertions of the Darogah, that on the twenty-fifth May Hossain Buksh and other witnesses sent up by the Darogah were examined. Hossain Buksh distinctly denied that he has ever been deputed by the Darogah to make or have made any prohibitory proclamation. He stated that the proclamation had been received at the Thana previous to the Dewali Puja but not published. The three other witnesses all Mohamedans said that they had not been present when the proclamation was made, but had seen **Charak** swung at Surroppore and had then heard from others that a proclamation had been previously made prohibiting the performance of the ceremony.

That upon this evidence the Magistrate on the 25th of May sentenced the Naib and all the other defendants to imprisonment with labour for fifteen days, the labour, commutable for a fine of three rupees each, and suspended Hossain Buksh from his situation for one month for neglect in not promulgating the prohibitory order, although aware that it had reached the Thana. That you petitioner and the Naib appealed unsuccessfully to the Judge of Jessore. That the proceedings of the Magistrate were as your petitioner submits, illegal, unjust, intolerant and oppressive. Intolerant, because if the Magistrate could be brought to persuade himself that the ceremony of swinging on the **Charak** does actually constitute a breach of the law, yet usage from time immemorial in this country, in open day, with the full knowledge and often in the presence of the highest Judicial Officers has sanctioned the rite, so that its abolition rests not on the arbitrary will of a solitary Magistrate but requires a solemn enactment of the Legislature; Illegal, because there is no law or regulation expressly prohibiting the swinging on the **Charak** and because neither the voluntary infliction of self-torture nor endangering the life nor being present during such infraction can be construed into a breach of the peace.

That your petitioner and his family have for a long time held landed property in no less than seventeen Zillas in Bengal and during their tenure the whole of their extensive possessions have been remarkable for the peaceable and orderly conduct of the inhabitants of all classes.

1. Taherpur—may be identified with the well-known place in Ranaghat subdivision, Nadia district situated on the Ichhamati.

ANNEXURE A.

Roobcaree of the Fauzdaree Court of Zillah Jessore, dated 29th March, 1849 (17th Chaitra, 1255).

From F. L. Beaufort, Magistrate of Jessore.

Whereas it is evident that on the occasion of the Dewali Puja all people swing churruck for which loss of life is probable and which is attended with bodily torture which it is necessary to prevent, it is hereby ordered that the perwahnahs be issued to all the Thannadars and Mohurrers of all Pharies* directing them to issue proclamations prohibiting everybody from swinging on Churruck on the occasions of the Dewali Poojah. Should any one do so they are to apprehend and send him up to the Huzoor.

(a) Statement of Ganga Charan Roy, Mohurrer of Thana Kotchandpur.

I heard that Dewali has been worshipped at Sorroppore, Sultanpore, Taherpore and owing to the probability of the Churruck being swung, I deputed Ramdayal Burkundaz to apprehend and bring with evidence the offenders. He returned with the following persons. He did not hear of any person having been swung at Sultanpore and Taherpore but was informed that Nilmony Mukherjee had caused five men to be swung on a Churruck. These men had bored their feet. That the Naib had caused Prohlad Ghose, Guro Churan Ghose, Udai Ghose, Bhagbat Kahar of our village and Khoodad Kahar of Basheerya to be swung on the Churruck. He had caused their feet to be bored for the occasion, a circumstance which might have attended with loss of life. I have deputed the Jamadar to trace out, apprehend, send the Naib and others with evidence, and also to enquire and arrest the offenders, if Churruck had been swung at Taherpore and Sultanpore and I sent Sreekuntha Ghose, Gopal Ghose, Zamiruddin chowkidar, Bhagai Chowkidar and Ramchand Ghose, witnesses with a regular chalan together with the papers for your information, 14th April, 1849 (3rd Baisak, 1256).

Deposition of witnesses, Ramchand Ghose, son of Netai Ghose, of Bhagayee Chowkidar, son of Ashraf, Muhammadan by caste. Deposition of Gopal Ghose, son of Bangshee Ghose, aged 20 years by caste cowherd, and others.

(b) The defence of Bhagbat Kahar, son of Benode Kahar.

In the Zemindar's Gajan at Surroppore I had my feet bored and swung on the Churruck. My father and grandfather had swung on Churruck and so did I. I do not know reading and writing. I did not receive any news of the churruck being prohibited. (Similar defence was made by other prisoners such Khodeyee Kahar, son of Chunder Kahar, aged 20 years. Prohlad Ghose, son of Rasoonder Ghose aged 25 years, by caste Satgope. Gurucharan Ghose son of Thakoor Dass Ghose, by caste Satgope. The last one deposed saying we all became Sanyasies in the Gajan of Surroppore. This year also I became a Sanyasy, bored my thigh and swung on the Churruck. This is the custom of our family. Udai Ghose, son of Rajaram Ghose, aged 17 years, by caste a Satgope and a farmer by profession, said I bored my back and swung on a Churruck. My ancestor did it and I followed their example.

* Phari—police outpost.

From—J. P. Grant, Secy. to the Government, To—W. Dampier S.P.,
Lower Provinces, 8th September, 1849.

(The Deputy Governor forwarded the petition of Rajendra Mohan Tagore to Mr. Dampier directing the latter to call for an explanation and submit the same to the Government together with his report on the case).

The Deputy Governor further observed that the proceeding judging from the Magistrate's own records "seems to argue either extraordinary ignorance and presumption on his part in arrogating such a power, or the most arbitrary and unjust conduct, in punishing people for not attending to his unauthorised commands and the nature of the affair in relation to which these unwarrantable proceedings took place greatly adds to their mischievous character. His Honour wishes to hear all that Mr. Beaufort has to urge in excuse of his conduct."

From—J. P. Grant.

To—Rajendra Mohan Tagore

9th November, 1849.

The Magistrate of Jessore having been called upon for explanation of the proceedings which formed the subject of your complaint has in no wise satisfied him that they were otherwise than most unobjectionable. A very severe censure has been passed upon his conduct.

Document No. 2

A Bengali petition, from Ramcoomar Mazumdar for Raja Barodakanta Roy, Zemindar of Pargana Syedpore in Jessore to the address of W. Seton-Kerr.

That the circumstances of Mr. Beaufort, Magistrate of Jessore, having received some severe rebukes in an English letter from Government for his having last year prohibited the practice of swinging on Churruck etc., a feeling of joy pervaded the whole community in as much as **they felt persuaded that their religion is preserved.** That at Mohangunj Churruck Puja is performed every year from generation to generation on the part of his Principal's family, that on the occasion of the Churruck Puja of the present year, every preliminary ceremony having been performed, the Churruck posts were erected, the swingers were present and all necessary arrangements were present for swinging. That seeing this preparation several other parties in the districts followed the example and were erecting their Churruck to the number of 7 or 8. That while things were in this state, the above named Magistrate driving in person on the spot accompanied by the Darogah and a host of attendants ordered the Churruck posts of his principal to be cut down and felled to the ground, to which the Darogah objected showing that the orders of Government bear against such a measure. On this he abused the Darogah, and caused the Churruck which was consecrated to be pulled down by 5 or 6 Mussalmans. That after this was done the Magistrate went off muttering disrespectful words towards Government and that the other parties seeing the fate of his Churruck ran away from their respective places, leaving the Churrucks behind. Represents that this proceeding of the Magistrate has not only compromised the dignity of his principal and wounded his religious feeling but has lowered the Government in the estimation of the people consequent on the defiance of its order by the said officers.

From—F. L. Beaufort.

To—Wm. Dampier, S.P.

6th May, 1850.

I have the fullest reason to believe that this petition was forwarded without the knowledge or consent of the Raja. You may be well assured that I should not again be guilty of any acts which would draw upon the displeasure of the Deputy Governor. In truth when several petitions were presented to me, I told the petitioners that they were to have Churrucks as usual and consequent on this this the Churrucks were as numerous, if not more numerous, than ever. Among others was one in the compound of Raja Baroda Kanta Roy's Rajbari and one just outside it. The statement of the petition that I in any way interfered with the celebration of the Puja is therefore totally false. A few days before the Puja some of the Raja's servants employed in the town with a Mukteer came to me and said that they wished to erect a Churruck in the Bazar. I objected to this at once because I have taken great pains to open and drain the Bazar, level the ground and keep free. I pointed out that the erection of Churruck in that place would interfere with business of the hat, and that digging a large hole in the ground would destroy the market place. I pointed out many other places within a quarter of mile in the Bazar where there was open ground and every facility for the erection of the Churrucks and the Hindus to whom I had addressed myself concurred in the justice of my views. I heard nothing more regarding the matter until the day of the Pujah when the Kotwali Daroga reported to me that the Churruck had been secretly erected during the night in the market place. And I therefore ordered him himself a Hindu to remove it which he did. I have since learnt that it was erected by a certain Mussalman who claims to exercise some interference with the Bazar and whose petty oppression I have stopped. The rest of the statement is entirely false.

Document No. III

Memorial of the Calcutta Missionary Conference

Judcl Proceedgs. 7th Aug., 1856, No. 52.

From Rev. D. Ewart
Secy. to the Calcutta
Missionary Conference
8th March, 1855.

To
Frederick James Halliday,
Lt. Governor of Bengal.

1. That your memorialists in the prosecution of the labours for the spiritual welfare of the people of Bengal, have had frequent occasion to observe the cruel character of the rites attending one of the Hindu festivals, called the Châarak Puja and they desire . . . to draw your Honour's attention to these practices with the view of securing such interferences on the part of government as may effectually check that cruelty for the future.

That while other numerous festivals, annually celebrated among the Hindus, apart from the degrading idol-worship are accompanied merely by animal sacrifices, processions, dances, music and feasting, the Charak Puja is distinguished by the performance of certain ceremonies which designedly inflict considerable suffering upon a multitude of devotees. During the three principal days in which that festival is celebrated in Bengal, these devotees cast themselves on thorns, and upraised knives; they pierce their

arms or tongues by iron arrows, draw strings through the flesh of their arms or tongues by iron arrows, draw strings through the flesh of their sides or fix thereto spikes that are heated by a continually burning fire; while others swing on the Charak tree by hooks fastened through the muscles of their backs.

That great evils necessarily result from such brutalizing practices. The devotees themselves experience much suffering, aggravated by the season of the year, when the practices occur. In some cases, even death ensues and instances are known of persons who have broken from the swing and have been hurled violently to the ground. On the people at large the effect has been to harden the hearts of all who engage in the practices, or behold them with pleasure, to deaden right feelings of compassion towards the pains of others and to debase them to that condition of heart which has been regarded as peculiarly characteristic of races in a savage state. **This brutalizing influence, which is exerted very widely upon the common people, your memorialists regard as an evil of the greatest magnitude.**

That though perpetrated in connection with religious ceremonies, these practices have not received the sanction of the highest authorities in questions regarding the Hindu religion; **that they are scarcely known in Upper India and are to a considerable extent, confined to Bengal;** that whilst encouraged as works of merit by the wealthy, they are performed chiefly by the lowest class of the people, many of whom are hired for the purpose: that frequently in order to bear the pain attendant upon them, the devotees resort to the stimulus of intoxicating drugs.

That great and revolting as the evils still are, your Memorialists acknowledge, they are not so abundant, as they were in former years. The spread of knowledge respecting religious and moral truth, a clearer perception of what constitutes real religion, and the relations and duties between man and man, with other influences arising from the intercourse between European and Native, in society, at large have caused these barbarous rites in some degree, to be less honoured, especially in Calcutta and its immediate neighbourhood. Native newspapers reprobate the cruelties practised. Respectable Hindu gentlemen repudiate them, as not being a part of their religion and intelligent native, when addressed on the subject, readily acknowledge the folly and the error of continuing them.

With these facts before them, your Memorialists earnestly pray that your honour will endeavour to adopt such measures, as may tend to put a complete stop to the evils of which they complain. They trust that in a matter so important they will not be misunderstood. It is not the religious ceremony of the **Charak Puja** as such, in which they desire the interference of the govt. It is not to the animal sacrifices, the offerings, the processions, the worship or the dances to which they draw your Honour's attention. They seek no interference with the religious convictions of idolators. But it is the cruelties of the festival they desire to see suppressed. They refer exclusively to acts of barbarism and suffering which no humane man can defend . . . While drawing the attention of the government to these public evils, Your Memorialists feel that their entire removal from the country at large can spring only from that complete change in the religious views of the people which it is the object of their high office to promote . . .

In the name and by order of the Calcutta Missionary Conference.

Document No. IV

Note by the Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal, 6th July, 1856.

The Honourable the Court of Directors, having remarked in a despatch to the Govt. of India, 2nd March, 1853 that if the practice of swinging on **Charak** was found to be attended with cruelty and liable to be enforced without the free consent of parties submitting to it, they doubted not that the Govt. would consider what measures should be adopted with reference to it. The Commissioners of the South West Frontier and Assam, and the Superintendents of Police, Lower Provinces, Chittagong and Cuttack were requested to report on the subject and to state whether the existing law was sufficient for preventing the crime or whether in their opinion any special measures were required.

The Commissioner of the South West Frontier, Crawford, stated in reply that from enquiries made by him, he had no reason to believe that swinging on **Charak** was enforced anywhere within his agency, without the free consent of the parties submitting on to it and that he was of opinion that the existing law was quite sufficient for the prevention and punishment of this crime.

The reply of the Supdt. of Police for Chittagong Mr. Stainforth was to the effect that no cases of cruelty or force in the Hindu festival **Charak Puja** had been brought to his notice, and that the natives appeared to swing at their free will and pleasure, receiving reward from the more affluent for their trouble. The Magistrate of Chittagong recommended that the practice should be restricted to cases in which force was used or in which the persons who gave themselves up to be swung did so under the influence of intoxicating drugs. The Commissioner of Assam reported that the practices of swinging at the **Charak Puja** did not exist in that province, except in the district of Goalpara and there it was of rare occurrence, no cruelty being exercised and no swinging ever enforced except with the voluntary consent of the swinger.

The Superintendent of Police for Cuttack Mr. Gouldsburg stated that no case had been brought to notice in which the practice of swinging in the **Charak** had been enforced without consent of the parties submitting to it, but that many resorted to it as a **measure of gain**. Mr. Gouldsburg stated that the authoritative suppression of the rite would be regarded with satisfaction by the sensible portion of the Hindu Community and with indifference by the rest.

No reply was received from Supdt. of Police, Lower Provinces.

Patna Division—Mr. Dampier reports as follows:—

The performance of this rite is nowhere inculcated by the **shastras**, it having been introduced by a certain Raja who was a great worshipper of Kali, but amongst the Bengalis, it has come to be looked upon so much as part of their religion, that even some of the most **enlightened and best educated gentlemen are obliged to have the ceremonies annually performed at their residence or within their estates, for gratification of their tenantry.**

In the province of Bihar it has not taken such root and there it is principally performed by Bengalis or their descendants and the people flock to witness the scene, as the people of **England gather to see man ascend on horseback with a balloon or the Italian brothers go up, suspended by their**

feet to the balloon car. There is also generally a mela held at the place where the ceremony occurs.

The persons undergoing the operations of swinging or having their tongue, cheek and various parts of their body, pierced with iron skewers are generally of the lowest class and are prepared and excited at the time by intoxicating drugs and liquors. Fatal accidents do sometimes occur on the spot, by the fall of the person being swung but we have no means of learning all such that do happen or the deaths which may take place from the wounds inflicted on the performers of these rites.

It is certainly a cruel and brutal ceremony mixed up with much licentiousness and obscenity which ought to be suppressed by law, but without an enactment prohibiting the performance of it which would enable the magistrates to call on the zamindars and others to aid them in its suppression, it would be dangerous to attempt to do so. The people are attached to the ceremony and the police is not of sufficient strength to put it down and any premature attempt to do so would assuredly lead to tumultuous riots and perhaps to serious loss of life.

The practice of swinging on the occasion of the Charak Puja festival has no warrant in the **Shastras** and all respectable Hindus would rejoice at the suppression of so barbarous and debasing an exhibition. The Commissioner strongly recommends the suppression of the practice of swinging but the festival must remain and be observed as usual in all public offices to enable the Hindus to perform the rites really prescribed by the **Shastras**.

Chittagong Division—The Commissioner would wish it to be suppressed.

Burdwan Division :

The several Pandits consulted by the **Magistrate of Birbhum** are unable to point out any sanction for the swinging portion of the Pujah, but say that from the great length of time during which these rites have been practised, they have no doubt that there is some authority.

Rai Kishorichand Mitter, formerly Deputy Magistrate of Jahanabad and now Junior Magistrate of the Calcutta Police, says that the most learned oriental scholars admit that the custom is not recognized by the religious code of the Hindus and that the better and more enlightened portion of the Hindus view it with disfavour, if not with disgust.

The Pandit of Bancoorah says that the practice of swinging and self-inflicted torture is authorised by the **Shasters** but they have in all cases admitted their inability to point out the passage on which their opinion is founded. In some instances they have conferred that they do not know whether the practice has the sanction of the **Shasters** or not, but they have invariably added that it receives their own countenance. The Magistrate Mr. Spankie has no doubt whatever that any authoritative suppression of the Churrack, on the part of the government, would be received with dissatisfaction and he thinks that if the practice of swinging is to be prohibited, the greatest care should be taken so that the order of government are not misinterpreted. He goes on to say that a Mussalman darogah or a Mussalman Zemindar might easily seize the opportunity of maliciously disseminating reports that the worship of Shiva had been declared illegal and the fanaticism of a few bigots might produce most lamentable consequences. On

the other hand, if through mere carelessness, the motives of the govt. and the extent of its intended interference are not duly explained to the people, they might be induced to believe that a blow had been struck at their religion.

Dacca Division :

The feelings of the more respectable Hindoos are quite opposed to the practice as now existing and the Commissioner considers that its suppression would not be attended with the least difficulty.

Rajshahi Division :

Babu Gopaldas Mitter, the Deputy Magistrate, is of opinion that the suppression of swinging would be beneficial to the country, but the entire suppression of the Charak Puja itself would be regarded with great dissatisfaction by the Hindoo community, and would hurt their feelings, as the ceremony has been in practice from time immemorial.

Chotanagpur—Mr. Allen.

The practice of swinging is not enjoined by the Shasters and therefore it can be abolished without any breach of faith, but Mr. Allen doubts the policy of suppressing the superstition by law. He considers that any interference with the religious prejudices and observances of the people of the country is much to be deprecated on moral as well as political grounds, and he would invoke the aid, not of the legislature but of the school master against the Churruck Puja.

Darjeeling and Cachar :

The practice does not prevail in either of the districts.

Judl. Proceedg. 7th Aug., 1856.

Extract from a Despatch from the Honble, the Court of Directors :—

We observe that enquiry has been instituted by the Lieutenant Governor with a view to the authoritative suppression of the practice of swinging on the Churrack, as it is stated, that it would be regarded with satisfaction by the sensible part of the Hindu Community and with indifference by the rest. We should prefer, however, that your endeavour for the suppression of this practice should be based on the exertion of influence rather than upon act of authority.

VOLTAIRE AND 18TH. CENTURY EUROPE

R. ANTOINE, S. J.

At the end of the 17th. century, in the year 1694, Francois Arouet was born in Paris in a middle-class family. That was the end of a glorious period. Moliere and Corneille were dead. La Fontaine and Racine had only a very short time to live. Boileau, the accredited arbiter of literary good manners, was getting on in years. Like an old fighter anxious to spend his least energies in the defense of Orthodoxy, Bossuet, almost a septuagenarian, was opposing the rising tide of the new spirit and using his influence to sharpen the vigilance of the royal censorship against the free-thinkers.

Yet, free-thought, with its innate dislike for any kind of absolutism, whether religious or political, was forging ahead. From his exile in Amsterdam, Pierre Bayle, in the full strength of his career, was ready to send to the press the voluminous manuscript of his *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique* which would be completed in 1697. Fontenelle, the soft-spoken sceptic, had already sown in many minds the seeds of doubt. Montesquieu was a boy of five. Before Voltaire was twenty-five, the future champions of the new philosophy would be born, Rousseau in 1712, Diderot, in 1713, Helvetius, in 1715, and and d' Alembert, in 1717.

On the other side of the Channel, great things were in preparation. Although England was little known in France during the 17th. century, it was soon going to take a leading part in the literary and philosophical life of Europe. Milton had died in 1674, twenty years before Voltaire's birth. Dryden has six more years to live. Defoe, Swift, Congreve, Addison and Steele were young men, Pope was a child, and Sterne was not born. English deism aspiring to a purely natural religion without revelation was already undermining the foundations of Christianity. "Enlightenment" as the liberation of human reason and the assertion of its complete autonomy was in the air. Religion was gradually reduced to sound morality, and God, if mentioned at all, was relegated to an inaccessible sphere.

A little world, cosily man-centred, was being built on the foundation of serene relativism. John Locke had published his *Essay concerning Human Understanding* in 1690, and Voltaire was to find in it a substantial food to quench his appetite for useful ideas and for toleration. There was Newton also, whom Voltaire would introduce to the French public, and in whom he found the genius who had unravelled the mystery of the universe.

At the beginning of the 18th. century, Francois Arouet became a pupil of the Jesuits, in the famous College Louis le Grand. He received from them that classical training of the mind which insists on the value of rules and well-defined standards. His masters had no great sympathy for the new ideas. Their intelligent and ambitious pupil soon realized that success lay on the side of the innovators, and he left the Jesuits with a well-trained mind, a supple instrument which he would use for anything but the defence of the ideals which the good fathers had tried to inculcate into him.

He was a middle class young man, and he felt it. He would have done anything to be received as an equal by the members of the aristocracy. But they somehow always managed to make him conscious of his low origin in spite of the share they gave him in their frivolous existence. It was no good to argue with them, for his cleverness found no reward except a public thrashing and a stay in the Bastille.

Disgusted with France, he went to England where he lived for about three years. There his ideas crystallized. Through his contact with the deists and with the writers of the day, he found his real vocation. He would be the spiritual father of Europe and teach to the continent the lesson of religious and political liberalism which England taught him. He was gifted with a rare capacity of assimilation which enabled him to pick up ideas left and right and make them his own. Fully conscious of his power, he returned to France and decided to conquer the first place in the literary world without the humiliating support of the aristocracy. The condemnation of his *Lettres Philosophiques* made him seek shelter in Lorraine in the beautiful house of the beautiful Emily, Madame du Chatelet. Fourteen years he spent with her, in an atmosphere of luxury, helping his charming hostess in her scientific experiments and writing tirelessly. After Emily's death, Voltaire accepted the invitation of Frederick, king of Prussia. With his royal friend, he enjoyed the

pleasures of enlightened conversation. But the two friends grew tired of each other. Possessive and tyrannical, the Prussian king found his guest too cunning and clever. In 1753, Voltaire was back in France, without permanent abode and always afraid of being arrested. He bought a house in Geneva. There d' Alembert contacted him and obtained his collaboration for the Encyclopaedia. From 1758, Voltaire spent most of his last twenty years at Ferney. He had become the 'patriarch', consulted by hundreds of people, keeping a voluminous correspondence with the whole of Europe, and writing his last works. Towards the end, he knew the triumph for which he had been living. Paris acclaimed him on the occasion of the performance of his play *Irene*, the actors crowned his bust and cheering crowds accompanied him to his Paris residence where he died, a short time after, on the 30th. May 1778.

We have before us the most representative personality of the 18th. century. As an heir of the French classical tradition, he is inclined to keep to those rigid standards which form the external framework of classicism rather than its inner inspiration. As a philosopher, he is attracted by liberalism and tolerance and considers it his mission to broadcast the new ideas. As a man, he is an ambitious bourgeois, smarting under the humiliation of social inferiority and decided to rise to a commanding position at any cost.

I. Voltaire, the Classicist.

Before going to England, Voltaire has been in touch with a few Englishmen, especially with Bolingbroke who surprised him by his cosmopolitan culture. It was Bolingbroke who introduced the work of Voltaire to Swift and Pope. The reputation of English letters in France was not flattering. Saint Evremont, after leaving England, had concluded that "the Frenchman thinks, while the Englishman talks." Dryden was considered as the greatest English poet. Shakespeare in his eagerness to flatter the taste of his audience "makes blood flow on the stage and never fails to represent the most cruel catastrophes." Swift was "vulgar and impious". Voltaire arrived in England for the funerals of Newton. He mixed with the high society and met Young, Congreve, Pope, Swift, Clark and Gay. The English theatre initiated him to Shakespeare. As a Frenchman educated in the classical tradition of distinction and regularity, he deplored the lack of decency and of composition in the English

tragedy, but he was sufficiently broad-minded to acknowledge that the national character and climate have a deep influence on literary productions. However, he felt glad that the contemporary English playwrights had adopted the wise rules which French classicism had never abandoned. His *Lettres philosophiques on anglaises* incorporate his experience in England. Regarding Shakespeare, he is less indulgent than when he was in England and seems to forget his own reflections on the national character of literature. "Shakespeare," he writes, "is endowed with force, creativeness, natural and sublime, but without the slightest spark of good taste and without any knowledge of the rules of the tragedy." His tragedies are "monstrous farces". Did not Rymer speak of Othello as a "bloody farce"? Voltaire, however, does not condemn everything in Shakespeare and advises his readers to read an anthology of the great tragedian, for, "those barbarian dramas lacking in good taste, order and truth have surprising flashes in the midst of that night." Yet Addison and others, while submitting to the rules have succeeded only in producing cold and lifeless tragedies. It would appear, therefore, that "the poetical genius of the English looks like a wild tree throwing at random its numerous branches and growing without order and with force, but dying if one attempts to prune it."

Voltaire is too intelligent not to have realized that a proper dose of Shakespearian 'barbarism' could enliven and greatly improve French tragedy. But what he borrows from Shakespeare is not the powerful inspiration of the great Elizabethan, but a few pathetic scenes meant to animate the monotony of endless discourses: Anthony producing the body of Caesar, the ghost of the king, some scenes of Othello. The judgment of Lessing concerning Voltaire's borrowings from Shakespeare is worth quoting. "From the tragical pyre erected by Shakespeare Voltaire has stolen one firebrand, but one which gives more smoke than light or heat."

The cold reaction of the French public disappointed Voltaire. On the other hand, Shakespeare was being translated and found more favour with the public than the hybrid composition of Voltaire. Resentment and bitterness against poor William soon found expression in his *Essai sur les Moeurs*, his *Theatre anglais* and his correspondence. Here is a specimen of Voltaire's bitter mood: "Imagine, madam, that the tragedy Richard III, which they compare to *Cinna*, takes nine years as unity of time, a dozen towns and battlefields as

unity of place, and thirty-seven main incidents as unity of action." Then after a diatribe against the coarseness of the play he concludes: "I am telling all that, madam, because I am full of it. Is it not sad that the land which has produced Newton should also have produced those monsters and should admire them?" (Lettre a la marquise du Deffand) The last blow to Voltaire's wounded vanity was given by Le Tourneur who, in the preface of his translation of Shakespeare, mentions Racine, Corneille and Moliere, but leaves out the name of Voltaire. The old man, totally frustrated, fustigates the impertinent who claimed "that Shakespeare is the only model of true tragedy...What is most abominable is that the monster has a party in France and that it was I who spoke first of Shakespeare, I who showed to the French the few pearls which I had found in his enormous dunghill." With the complicity of d'Alembert, secretary of the French Academy, he had a long and venomous letter read out before the Immortals who unanimously condemned the bad taste of Shakespeare fans.

There is one trait of the English temperament which always attracted Voltaire. That is the satiric trait. He enjoys Butler's *Hudibras* and Garth's *The Dispensary*. Swift he considers to be the English Rabelais. He prefers *A Tale of a Tub* to *Gulliver* and greatly relishes the scepticism of a churchman. Sterne's delicate dosage of wit and judgement appealed much to Voltaire. Unfortunately for Sterne, Frenais began translating *Tristram Shandy* before the old man of Ferney died. Voltaire had made use of Sterne in several of his tales and he resented the fact that the French public should get a deeper acquaintance with his model. For the sake of preserving the good taste of the French public he expressed the wish that the translation should not be completed.

Of all the English poets, Dryden is Voltaire's favourite. Both men thought alike on the subject of dramatic poetry and many opinions found in Dryden's *Essay on Dramatic Poesy* are echoed in Voltaire's *Discourse sur la tragedie*. Dryden's odes he considers to be master-pieces. Pope comes second and Voltaire admires in him the clarity and regularity of the classic. "He has transformed the shrill blast of the English trumpet into the sweet notes of the flute." The *Essay on Man* captivates the mind of Voltaire who does not hesitate to place him higher than Plato: "Plato spoke as a poet in his complicated prose; Pope speaks as a philosopher in his admirable

verses." When the earthquake of Lisbon will have shaken Voltaire's optimism, he will relish less the philosophy of Pope, although Pope the satirist, will remain a source of inspiration. Voltaire's judgement on Milton is inspired by his anti-puritan and anti-republican bias and his dislike for imaginary supernatural and 'theological absurdities,' which Butler had ridiculed in his *Hudibras*. Did Voltaire give his final judgement on Milton when he put on the lips of Count Pococurante, in *Candide*, this virulent diatribe, "Milton? that barbarian who made a tedious commentary on the first chapter of Genesis in ten books of rugged verses? That clumsy imitator of the Greeks, who disfigures the creation and, instead of representing the Eternal Being, as Moses does, creating the universe at a word, makes the Messiah take a large pair of compasses from one of the cupboards of Heaven to draw a plan of his intended work? Do you expect me to appreciate the man who has spoiled Tasso's conception of Hell and the Devil, who disguises Lucifer first as a toad and then as a pigmy, who makes him repeat the same speeches a hundred times, and even argue about theology? Why, the man has so little humour as to imitate in all seriousness Ariosto's comic invention of firearms and make the devils fire cannons in Heaven! Neither I nor any one in Italy can take pleasure in these sorry extravagances..."!

II. Voltaire, the philosopher.

Literature was not, in the eyes of Voltaire, the best which England had to offer. England was the land of free-thought, while in Italy and France no one dared "entertain an idea without the permission of a cleric." The use of coercion for the maintenance of orthodoxy is always a sign of internal weakness. Rationalism and religious naturalism are the normal fruits of enforced orthodoxy. The human mind has a natural tendency to assert its autonomy against conformism: "It belongs to this century of enlightenment," writes Voltaire, "to refuse to follow this or that philosopher. Founders of sects do not exist any longer. The only founder is *demonstration*." Hence, the immense success of science and philosophy. Newton, who "had left the abysses of theology in which he had been brought up for mathematical truth" discovered the secret and universal principle which governs all the movements of nature. Voltaire was enthusiastic and expressed his enthusiasm in verse. Religious fanaticism fed on fables and mythologies had at last received a deadly blow.

It is in England again that Voltaire finds the social and political ideas which the French bourgeois, victim of royal absolutism, is trying to formulate. Repelled by Hobbes' doctrine according to which force is the foundation of right, Voltaire admires the broad tolerance of Locke. Bolingbroke was advocating the separation of legislative and executive power supporting a form of government combining monarchy, aristocracy and democracy. In one sentence, Voltaire has expressed his admiration for England as no other could have done who had not been like him sent to the Bastille through the insolence of a nobleman: "The English nation is the only nation on the earth which has succeeded in controlling the power of the kings by resisting them, and through persevering efforts, has at last established that form of wise government in which the Prince, all powerful to do good, has his hands tied when he wants to do evil, where the nobles are great without being insolent and without vassals, and where the people have their share in the government without confusion." Freedom of the press, religious toleration, equality of taxation, the certainty to have a peaceful sleep at night without fear of being arrested in the morning and taken to prison or to the desert, that is what Voltaire likes. He is not a revolutionary; to control the royal power without abolishing it, that is the ideal which he pursues. In fact, he is a good bourgeois very keen on preserving his individual freedom and uninterested in the plight of the people.

Intellectually, he considers himself as the teacher of his contemporaries and the message which it is his mission to convey is the message of the Enlightenment. If he is, for personal reasons, critical of English literature, his fascination for English philosophy is almost unconditional. He does not hesitate to write: "Between Plato and Locke, there is nothing...But Locke alone has developed human understanding in a book which contains nothing but truth; and what makes that book perfect is that all its truths are clear." There are no innate ideas. Our knowledge comes from our experience and that experience must pass through our senses. Therefore, we must acknowledge our ignorance of all that lies beyond our senses. Such is the lesson which Voltaire has learned from Locke. The agnosticism which follows should bring serenity to the human mind. Yet, at least in the case of Voltaire, the mind is for ever trying to transcend its limits. That is why Voltaire ventured to write his *Traite de Metaphysique*. But even there, he proceeds carefully. He does not want to expose

himself to the reproach of dogmatism and empty speculation which he himself has levelled against the metaphysicians of the past. That is why he approaches the great metaphysical problems from the angle of morality and utilitarianism. Is it useful for human society to believe in God? Is it useful to hold that man is free? Both questions, in the eyes of Voltaire, must be answered in the affirmative because the belief in God and in human freedom are the very foundation of morality. Yet, like Locke, Voltaire gradually begins to doubt the reality of human freedom. It is under the pressure of desire that man takes decisions, and the only power we have is that of comparing among themselves the various desires which solicit our wills. But that restriction of human freedom fortunately does not affect the moral principles which Voltaire considers as essential to the welfare of mankind. If beliefs and dogmas differ from country to country, the fundamental ideas of what is just and what is unjust are universal. It is on that idea of justice that universal tolerance is to be based. Let all men abandon their dogmas and theologies, give up the idea that they have received a particular revelation from God and found their individual and social life on the common heritage of that innate sense of justice which God has imparted to all men. Dr. Radhakrishnan, therefore, faithfully echoes Voltaire when he writes: "Whatever our theological beliefs and metaphysical opinions may be, we are all agreed that we should be kind and honest, grateful to our benefactors and sympathetic to the unfortunate." (*The Hindu View of Life*, p. 77).

Newton who, in the eyes of Voltaire, had successfully avoided the fatal mistakes of Descartes, upheld the necessity of God as the originator of the movement of the universe. It is according to the Newtonian pattern that Voltaire conceived God as the great watch-maker and the universe as an immense machine set into motion by God. But neither Locke nor Newton whose doctrines he used against atheism were radical enough for his taste. His religious philosophy found a better and stronger support in the English deists. For if Voltaire was a staunch adversary of atheism he was also a rabid enemy of the established religion. True to the principles of enlightenment, he considered that revelations, miracles, holy scriptures and the like were a challenge and an offence to the supremacy of reason. The English deists, especially Middleton and Annet, provided him with ready-made weapons by which he could assail the credulity of his contemporaries. Rites and ceremonies are good for the ignorant masses, but the

enlightened philosopher must profess a purely natural religion in which everything is based on pure reason.

Such a natural religion is characterized by its serenity. Optimism was in the air since Leibnitz and Wolf had broadcast it all over Europe. It had found a powerful echo in the English poet, Alexander Pope. The whole universe is pervaded by God's action and must, therefore, be without defect:

"Submit.—In this or any other sphere,
Secure to be as blest as thou canst bear:
Safe in the hand of one disposing Pow'r,
Or in the natal or in the mortal hour.
All nature is but Art, unknown to thee;
All chance, Direction, which, thou canst not see;
All Discord, Harmony not understood;
All partial evil, universal good;
And, spite of Pride, in erring Reason's spite,
One truth is clear, whatever is is Right."

Voltaire followed in the foot steps of Pope and became the target of those who wanted to defend Leibnitz against his caricaturists. As long as Voltaire could lead the life of an enlightened Epicurean, he remained an optimist. But life has its share of troubles and dangers. Friends and royal protectors proved less obliging than he expected, and gradually his optimism became less serene. The final blow was dealt by the shocking earthquake of Lisbonne in November 1755. The whole of Europe was deeply moved by the sudden catastrophe. The optimists saw in it the just punishment of sinners, the occasion for science to progress, and for new aesthetic experiences to be enjoyed. Voltaire was deeply disturbed and refused to believe that all is for the best:

Philosophes trompes qui criez: "Tout est bien."
Accourez. contemplez ces ruines affreuses,
Ces debris, ces lambeaux, ces cendres malheureuses,
Ces femmes, ces enfants l'un sur l'autre entasses,
Sous ces marbres rompus ces membres disperses;
Cent mille infortunes que la terre devore.

“THE TEMPTER” BY HERMANN BROCH :
A NOVEL OF OUR TIME

D. J. McCUTCHION

Now as long as the world was nurturing the animals within itself under the guidance of the Pilot, it produced little evil and great good ; but in becoming separated from him it always got on most excellently during the time immediately after it was let go, but as time went on and it grew forgetful, the ancient condition of disorder prevailed more and more and towards the end of the time reached its height, and the universe, mingling but little good with much of the opposite sort, was in danger of destruction for itself and those within it—Plato ; *Politicus*.

Hermann Broch, the modern Austrian novelist and sociological thinker, died in 1951. His early trilogy, “The Sleepwalkers”, published in 1931-2, attracted attention throughout the world, but his subsequent development was overshadowed by international tension and war. He has been placed on an equal footing with the greatest European writers of the 20th century—with Thomas Mann, Joyce or Proust—yet his name is unknown or forgotten. The publication of his works, as they are translated into other European languages, calls forth the highest critical praise—but very little subsequent attention. This neglect would have caused him dismay. He considered his contribution to the defence of humanism unique and urgent. Many times during his last years he voiced his anxiety that he would not live long enough to give all that he had to offer. No writer could have been more “engaged” in his time, more acutely concerned with the trends of his age.

The intention of this paper is to set him against the literary background of his period, and to suggest his importance by a study of his last work, “The Tempter” (“*Der Versucher*”) * or “Moun-

* “*Der Versucher*” von Hermann Broch. Rhein-Verlag, Zuerich.

tain-novel" as he called it ("*Bergroman*"), which was published posthumously in 1953. This novel, embracing many of his crucial themes, provides the best introduction to the general body of his work. It is a political allegory, bearing the same relation to the last World War as "*The Magic Mountain*" did to the first. But it came too late: a revulsion had set in against fictional studies of totalitarianism. The 1930s had seen a spate of books which analysed from the liberal-humanist stand-point the rise of fascism and the cult of power—Rex Warner's "*The Professor*" and "*The Aerodrome*" were typical. The frayed nerves of the 1940s, obsessed by violence and guilt, had given great vogue to the writings of Franz Kafka. But by 1953 the intelligent reading public was satiated with horror and turning its interest elsewhere. Furthermore, Broch's style is difficult, extended and dense with symbol—a legacy of the solid leisurely 19th century. The present-day reader prefers a crisp directness. Two decades of doubt and responsibility have produced a reaction in favour of entertainment. There can be little doubt, however, that the work of Broch will live by reason of its scope and vital significance, beside which the work of a Kingsley Amis or Robbe-Grillet seems trivial and vain.

By way of introduction to Broch and "*The Tempter*", I intend to discuss two modern poems which illustrate his dominant themes. The first is "*The Second Coming*" by W. B. Yeats. For his opening, Yeats uses a favorite image—the vortex: the word he actually uses is "gyre" (more familiar as the root in such words as "gyroscope," "gyration" etc.). He says:

"Turning and turning in the widening gyre

The falcon cannot hear the falconer;

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;

Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,..."

This theme is familiar: the disintegration of a civilization. Using the vortex as his symbol, Yeats sees the point of the vortex (the tip of the spinning top) as the original moment and creative idea from which a civilisation grows dynamically, spiralling upwards in wider and wider circles until it loses contact with the centre (the binding idea) and collapses. This idea of the centre as the source of coherence, form and meaning, both in man and in society, is prominent throughout Broch's novel. A recent German book on the chaotic state of modern European art is called "*Die Verlust der Mitte*"—

the loss of the centre. Culture has been losing the battle with anarchy. Few people nowadays can share Matthew Arnold's faith in art as a substitute for religion. Kierkegaard and the first World War made "sweetness and light" an aesthete's dream. The literature of the twentieth century has been dominated by the insecurity which comes of living by values which are known to be in dissolution. The diary of a Kafka bears irrefutable witness to the torment of existence without a centre. Joyce created a world of interlocking if arbitrary coherence in order to protect himself from chaos—he applied the Jesuit discipline to a secular world of objects. Other writers, like T. S. Eliot, sought refuge in tradition and the established church against threatening anarchy—the anarchy so vividly described by Hermann Hesse as quoted by Eliot in a note to the "Waste Land": "Already half Europe, already at least half East Europe is on the way to chaos, is rushing drunk in holy delirium along the abyss, and singing all the while, singing drunkenly and fervently as Dmitri Karamazoff sang. At these songs the businessman laughs offended—the saint and visionary hears them with tears." Certain forms of modern philosophy, notably French existentialism, far from checking this tendency, have accepted it as a first principle—the world is absurd, therefore each individual must create his own values to live by.

Such anarchy can only be temporary. Pursuing his theme, Yeats asks: what will be the germinating idea of the new civilisation which in its turn will start to spiral out from the centre of the collapse of the old? With unusually total pessimism, he sees it as the opposite of that which has determined our present civilisation. "The worst," he implies, who are "full of passionate intensity," will triumph, because "The best lack all conviction." This new germinal idea is represented by the vision of an animal reminiscent of the sphinx:

"Somewhere in sands of the desert

A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds."

In other words, the Christian morality of love and kindness will make way for another of cruelty and violence. Or as Auden has put it: "Never before was the intelligence so fertile, the heart so

stunted." Yeats later claimed that in this poem, written in 1919, he foretold the rise of fascism. Recently, the American writer Norman Mailer (author of "The Naked and the Dead") put forward a similar idea in an article on the "hipster"—New York's version of the London "teddy boy". He expressed the view that the lawlessness and terrorism of Central Park may be not so much a sign of adolescent maladjustment, as "the first wind of a second revolution in this century, moving not forward toward action and more rational equitable distribution, but backward toward being and the secrets of human energy." Such views, in which brutality gains the support of intelligence, whether deplored "with tears" or embraced with joy, go back ultimately to Nietzsche and his "Revaluation of all Values"—not "beyond good and evil," but the reversal of good and evil. In Broch's novel, the Tempter is such a prophet—proposing hatred in place of love, revenge in place of forgiveness, violence in place of reason. In the words of Yeats:

"The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned."

My second poem is complimentary to the first. To the view that any moral code is justified merely by its possibility, it opposes belief in an immanent spirit influencing us through *nature*. This spirit, a presence felt more than an active force, has been the guide and inspiration of poets throughout the ages. Its expression is allied to the whole pastoral tradition, which separated the idyllic countryside from the corrupt town, and goes back at least to Theocritus. Its most familiar English expression is in Wordsworth, who found solace in the Lake District from the pressures and complications of city politics. In our own day the nostalgia of the intellectual for mother earth has been particularly strong. The extremely fine adjustment which modern society demands, the nervous tension of living at high pressure, the divorce between knowledge and experience, between technique and feeling, all combine to induce a yearning for more simplified—"natural"—modes of existence. In France such feelings centered on Jean Giono, whose novels of the 1930s ("Colline" was published in 1929) presented a kind of Pagan cult, or mystic intimacy with the natural forces of the earth—the rise of the sap, the beat of the blood and the rhythm of the seasons. A work such as "Let my Joy Remain" gave by example a complete philosophy of natural living. Giono even tried to establish a community in the wild hills of his native Provence where disenchanting city people could live and work in intimate contact with the

earth, growing their own food, pressing their own olive oil. In England D. H. Lawrence, who also had schemes for establishing a "natural" community, expressed a similar revolt of the instincts against intellect and the machine. His position led him to be fascinated by pure violence—fascist brutality in "Kangaroo", and the dark, contained^o blood-lust of the Mexican Indian in "The Plumed Serpent". When it takes such forms, the rejection of reason approaches the cult of energy we have already noticed in the hipster, and results in mystiques such as "*Blut und Boden*". Broch preserves this ambivalence in "The Tempter." His prophet of revenge and destruction appeals to the same natural instincts as do the forces of love and harmony which he seeks to destroy : both good and evil claim to speak from the heart, and embrace the earth.

The reaction of a Lawrence is extreme, the result of overcompensation, but writers have generally agreed that intellect alone leads men to alienation and loss. The profound conviction of harmony between man and nature has been a recurrent theme of literature. In her essay on the novels of Thomas Hardy, Virginia Woolf wrote : "The peasants are the great sanctuary of sanity, the country the last stronghold of happiness." For Wordsworth, or Rilke, or Broch, this natural harmony is not the mere expression of instinct, which would leave man no different from the beasts, but rather an intuition of universal interdependence, an assurance of meaning, the presence of God.

My poem to illustrate this theme is by Rilke—the 26th Sonnet to Orpheus. Here the pervading spirit of harmony in nature is represented by Orpheus himself, who was torn to pieces by the Thracian Maenades and so in death became united with the world. He is the "lost God" that we dimly apprehend, but never find, who still sings to us in rocks and stones and trees. But for his presence we would neither respond to natural beauty, nor echo its harmony. For Rilke, I need hardly add, Orpheus symbolises the poet, who sacrifices himself that the world may speak through him. Throughout Broch's novel, which is set in the isolated grandeur of mountain scenery, the song of Orpheus never ceases to be heard. However shrilly the voice of the Tempter may rise, it can never destroy instinctive knowledge of right and wrong, which is quiet but eternal, as insistent as the seasons themselves.

Here is Rilke's Sonnet. The poet addresses Orpheus :

"But you, divinity, you, harmoniser to the end,
When the swarm of the scorned Maenades fell on their prey,

Have rung out above their screams with order—

Oh you beauty's friend !

Amidst the destruction rose your creative play.

Not one among them was there that could smash

Your head or your lyre—for all their raging and rearing;

And all the sharp stones which they

hard at your heart lashed !

Drew softness from you and were gifted with hearing.

Till the lust of vengeance pressed home to the kill

While your harmony lingered in lions and cliff faces

And in the trees and the birds. There you sing still.

O you lost God ! You infinite trace !

Only when rancour had finally spread you in pieces

Could we be listeners now, and of nature the voice."

It is in the context of these themes, then, that the final work of Broch may be best appreciated—societies collapse, evil is recurrent, but the spirit immanent in nature can never be destroyed.

Hermann Broch was born in Vienna, an Austrian Jew, in 1886. The most startling feature of his life is that his formation was technical, and for twenty two years, from 1908, he worked in his father's cloth factory, finally as manager. In 1927, at the age of 41, he entered the University of Vienna to study philosophy, mathematics and psychology. At this time he began "The Sleepwalkers," tracing the decline of values in Germany through three central figures: Pasenov portrays Romanticism in the period beginning from 1888; Esch portrays anarchy in the years preceding the Great War; and Hugenau represents the objectivity ("Neue Sachlichkeit") of the post-war period. The theories on which he continued to work included democracy as a form of total humanity, the relationship of mathematics and logic, and the unification of the sciences.

In 1933 Hitler assumed power in Germany, but Blackshirt gangs had been terrorising the streets for some previous time. The Jewish community in Vienna, whose intellectual ascendancy had long been resented in provincial Austria, responded with vague anxiety to the

distant threat. From 1934-5 Broch was working on the first version of "The Tempter". He sent it to the publisher, then immediately set to work on a second version, in which the participation of nature is greatly increased. At this time he was living in Moesern and Aussee. Moesern is a small village on a high plateau in the Austrian Alps. Here he came in close personal contact with the pagan myths and legends which so dominate his theme, and experienced too the close union of the remote villager with the living earth. 1938 was the year of the *Anschluss*: Broch was imprisoned by the Gestapo and condemned to death. He achieved a serene self-analytical detachment from fear, and wrote the first chapter of what subsequently became his most original achievement: "The Death of Virgil." Thanks to the intervention of friends, especially James Joyce, he was released from prison, and took refuge first in England, then America. By 1944 he had completed "The Death of Virgil," which he himself referred to as his "Finnegan's Wake," though it is far less obscure and does not rest bodily on word-play. It takes the form of an interior monologue of the dying Virgil, presenting his assumption of truth and reassimilation into the universe. As his consciousness fades, he becomes less and less Virgil, and more and more flesh, tree, rock, finally dissolving beyond time and space.

In 1949 Broch collected and organised into a unified whole a number of short stories he had written earlier in his life. He added some new ones, and published them under the title "The Innocents." They show the collective and individual indifference to suffering and evil which prepares the ground for totalitarian injustice. "The best lack all conviction while the worst—Are full of passionate intensity." The central figure, called A., has lost even the identity of a name: he moves neutral, detached, and impassive through a world that has lost all values—inaction brings ultimate responsibility. At the same time Broch was working on the final revision of "The Tempter." But in May 1951, before he had finished the eighth chapter, he died of a sudden heart attack.

The scene of Broch's last novel is set high in the Austrian Alps, where two small villages pursue a placid way of life untouched by industrial civilisation. The community, with its traditional patterns of living, is the form ("Gestalt") which man has created for himself out of chaos, to enable him to live. The ancient houses, time-hallowed methods of work, and yearly festivals, all confirm the villagers

in their identity. The processional banner, the Easter cakes, even the cups of coffee, all bring their special conviction—above all, the familiarity and warmth of the daily round. And the very centre of such security is family love: "Without common truth there is no community in life."

The country doctor tells the story, a learned humane man, who has taken refuge in the mountains from the disintegration of city life. But the village life is disintegrating too. Family quarrels, bitterness and jealousy are the symptoms of a profound disruption. Two marriages in particular are affected—that of the peasant Wentner (rooted in self-deception), and that of the innkeeper-butcher Sabest (rooted in lust). The traditional wisdom of the village, that instinctive knowledge which governs the harmony of the community, is incarnate in Mother Gisson. She is the Great Mother of mythology (an early title for the novel was "Demeter"), she is mother Nature, and according to ancient belief, when she embraces the earth, the world is reborn. Here she is represented by an old woman of strong personality and kindly wisdom, whose memory stretches back beyond the lives of all the villagers, and who knows the secrets of herbal remedies and the intricate patterns of natural forces. She has found the eternal centre in the heart, and knows that the goal of our most distant striving lies within us: "In der Mitte ruht dein fernster Ziel."

Her authority is challenged by a wanderer from nowhere, Marius, who arrives one spring afternoon on a cement lorry, and is taken in by Wentner. At first sight there seems to be nothing about him except an air of small-town self-righteousness, but he rapidly assumes an ascendancy over all the unhappy and insecure of the two villages. At first the villagers mistrust him, but he promises to get for them the gold from the mountain—the great Kuppron Mountain that lifts its massive granite ridge beyond the pastureland. He brings in a mis-shapen henchman, Wenzel, a cynical twisted dwarf, full of effrontery and deceit, who organises the youth of the villages into a military squad to parade and shout slogans. He bewitches Wentner's daughter, Irmgard, and uses her love for him to make her the willing victim of a ritual sacrifice. The spread of his insidious influence is set against the slow unfolding of the seasons, and the unvarying routine of country life—seedtime and harvest, birth and death, sickness, work and festivals.

High in the mountains the distinctions of time dissolve, and the relationship with the infinite is close. The gaunt Kuppron cliff

insists on the ageless background of man : the clatter of a motor-cycle over the pass "counted for no more than the tick of a watch". The Mittis couple, who live in isolation near the ridge, nurse their ancient grievances as though they had only happened yesterday. The villagers are perpetually aware of an unchanging reality behind the multiplicity of appearances. Their minds flick back and forth, behind the faces in church, from the present to the eternal, from the universal to the everyday. When the doctor walks in the forest, he hears the word 'God,' for the forest, like the night, dissolves all distinctions. One of the more articulate peasants, Suck, tells the doctor that a man "needs an image, with eternity hidden inside it, so that he can pray to it": a stone, he says, lives for ever. Above all, life itself is infinite, and all life is one—as Christ said: "Before Abraham was, I am." At one stage the doctor performs a "miracle" cure—he saves a dying child's life by sitting with it all night and allowing his strength to pass into the failing body.

It is not surprising that Broch should have been called a mystic, though he is not one. As the book approaches its end, distinctions of time are more and more dissolved. Within us lies the resolution of all contradictions: "The answer only comes when heaven and earth and death belong to our centre." Just before her death, Mother Gissson climbs high in the mountains, beyond time, and speaks with her dead grand-daughter Irmgard. All hatred is resolved in eternal forgiveness. Broch pursues the problem of evil on two plains of reality: on the relative plain, the evil that Marius brings must be combatted by the united conviction of all the good men; on the absolute plain, all conflict ends in eternal peace. The theme is as old as men's thought. As Heraclitus put it: "For God all things are beautiful and good and just, but men think some things unjust and others just."

The presence of nature pervades the lives of the villagers; they respond intuitively to her moods, awaiting in tension the bursting of a storm, the crack of an earthquake. There is a sympathy between the lives of men and the natural world: at the end of the stone-blessing ceremony, the sun breaks through, reflecting the relief that everybody feels; the warm weather holds out into November until Mother Gissson dies. The mountain exerts its fascination over all: "Jeden draengt zum Berg," says the hunter Matthias. It is silent, but will speak—"The mountains speak with their fire," says Donat the smith. It becomes a symbol of yearning and dissatisfaction. The young men

set out to seek the fire in the mountain, which is gold, which is copper...The half-lunatic Krimuss believes that death itself is in the mountain, and can be fetched out with the gold. Marius knows well how to play on these superstitions, half believing them himself: the mountain must be propitiated, he says, or it will revenge its desecration by the impure. The earth, he says, must drink blood.

Myths and legends dominate the unconscious minds of the villagers. Layers of ancient beliefs and superstitions lurk behind their rugged faces. The earth demons still exist, and the dwarfs and giants who fought deep in the mountain. The old mine-workings have become sacred, symbolising the mystery of nature and man's attempt to penetrate her. Pagan and Christian rites are mingled: at any moment the crucifix may become an axe. There was a dragon once that guarded the mountain, to whom a virgin had to be sacrificed every year, so that the mountain would release its gold. Still every year the procession trails up the mountain path, with the pastor at its head; but now it is only an affair of pantomime and verses, and this year the pastor is so exhausted that he can hardly make the top. For Christianity is failing, just as all the other forms of village life are breaking up. Habit has replaced vitality; meaning is lost—"Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold."

Above all, the unifying force of family love is breaking down. The Wentner and Sabest families live in tension bordering on hatred. Gilbert Sabest, who goes to little Agathe every night, has been repelled by the lust of his parents, which has produced in him a fixation against marriage ("that filthy business"). He is the first disciple of Marius, falling immediately for his talk of chastity. The common fear of the guilty Mittis couple has created a resentment too great to accept forgiveness. All who succumb to Marius lack that knowledge of the heart, which Mother Gisson has attained: they are turned outwards, instead of inwards. The loss of love leads them to seek love, but they cannot distinguish between love and hate. In their isolation, deprived of knowledge, which is only possible in a framework of order, they become victims of the primordial fears—darkness and destruction. Anxiety seizes them. Their sense of shame deepens, and they feel themselves impure: Marius, on the other hand, is "noble". They yearn for atonement, so Marius provides them with a ritual sacrifice: but instead of purifying them, the murder of Irmgard finally replaces their community of love by

a community of guilt. They demand a scapegoat: Marius offers them the Calvinist Wetchy, the insurance agent, the outsider, the man from the town—Hitler's Jew. All their fears and guilt, loneliness, remorse and insecurity, find expression in one word: "injustice". "Unjust"—everything that is wrong with their lives. As the doctor puts it: "Mankind is diabolically set on justice". Marius offers justice. The temptation is irresistible.

Mother Gisson gives way, because she knows that material hatred is stronger in the material world than spiritual love. She admits her time is up, "because hatred has no other outlet". Everything has its time: we can neither force events, nor prevent them. Just as in the storm or the earthquake the tension created by the build-up of natural forces is relaxed and eased, so the dynamic tensions of society must find release. Periodically there must be renewal, regeneration, redemption. The stable relationship with the infinite has broken down; men seek redemption through love, but do not examine the redeemer for love. The way is open for the false redeemer, who shares their sickness and offers it as a cure, who has never known love, and mistakes his hatred for love, who preaches "Wrong will fall before revenge, it will be avenged in the rage and hatred of men, by such rage will the world be restored..."

The figure of Marius the Tempter is one of the most significant creations of modern fiction. He is the wandering preacher, the inter-farer, the seducer, demagogue and would-be magician. He is Satan, Anti-Christ, the incarnate principle of evil. And yet he is a man, touching in his ultimate helplessness—the helplessness he never admits. He realises instinctively that Mother Gisson has the knowledge which he lacks; he pleads with her to give it to him. Yet when she does, he rejects it, for he seeks only to impose his own knowledge. He is self-centered, inaccessible, possessed by his own ideas: he bypasses all contradiction in vague generalisation. He denies the ideas of others, then assimilates them into his own system. He is unswerving, humourless, with no sense of proportion. Yet beneath his armour of pride, he is trusting, child-like, seeking... He is living a self imposed role, half comedian, half fanatic ("Irresein und Komödie"): by turns he is self-possessed, obstinate, shrill, or solemnly calm. He is a war-child, seeking his father in the doctor, his mother in Mother Gisson, and himself as the big brother of all who are cut off and lonely. He has no warmth of sympathy—the death of Irmgard

or of his henchman Wenzel leave him equally unmoved. He is indifferent to suffering—his own and others'. He is mad: "The psychosis of this man could not be doubted," says the doctor. His teaching shows all the extremism of the irretrievably alienated, yet through it runs a consistent perverse logic, which almost persuades the doctor himself. He is a force of disruption, and walks out of the church (a symbol of order). But he shares the common yearning for infinity—a fallen angel, homesick for heaven.

The teaching of Marius is an insidious mixture of intuition, half-truths, and pernicious lunacy. His use of symbol, incantation, and irrational associations makes a direct appeal to the villagers' unconscious minds. He brings a townsman's cult of the "holy earth", which only the pure can touch. Like Mother Gisson he realises that knowledge comes from the earth, but does not understand that this knowledge cannot be forced. Lacking her intimate identity with nature, he seeks (and finds) arbitrary signs to confirm his doctrines; after the earthquake, when the cable railway has collapsed, he shouts endlessly: the mountain has spoken—it has thrown off the railway! Machinery and impurity have desecrated the earth; she will only yield her knowledge when she has been propitiated. Everywhere he sees licentiousness, "Unzucht"—while this persists—there can be no 'justice'. Hence the cult of chastity, purity, discipline. He opposes women, who, he says, have drawn all truth to themselves: he forecasts the end of "women's time" and the coming of "men's time". He attacks machines and everything to do with town civilization—especially what Wetchy has brought: radio, money and mortgages. He introduces threshing by hand with resounding slogans: "Here man's bread is sown by man's hand, reaped by man's hand, and threshed by man's hand!" Like all people afraid of self-knowledge, he is anti-individual, and seeks to conquer death through "Kameradschaft"—all are in love, he says, as he unites them in a common hatred. If justice is established in one tiny part of the earth, he tells his disciples, it will magically spread and resolve all injustice. Thus the redeemer answers the yearning to fulfil the absolute in time.

If anything, Marius is a more sympathetic figure than Hitler, for Broch is more concerned with expressing his mystique than his practical politics: by making him more vulnerable, he makes him more human, more credible. Yet we can only wonder at the insight which enabled Broch to penetrate the mental pathology of the Nazi

leader, his balance between madness and its conscious exploitation, more shrewdly than any other writer at that time. Alan Bullock * confirmed his conclusions only after years of studying the evidence, during which his view changed as he became increasingly aware of the calculation with which Hitler exploited his grievances, envy and bad temper. The author of "Mein Kampf" understood well the propaganda appeal of violence and deceit: "The masses feel very little shame at being terrorised intellectually, and are scarcely conscious of the fact that their freedom as human beings is impudently abused." In Bullock's words: "a man without roots, with neither home nor family...who admitted no loyalties, was bound by no traditions, and felt respect neither for God nor man." It seems likely that Hitler, though he probably never read Hegel, saw himself as a "World-Historical Individual" carrying out the "Will of the World Spirit". On these terms his judgement would be infallible, defeat impossible: hence his final determination to sacrifice everything—country, people, civilisation—to his own Ego. This passionate conviction of his providential mission made his initial success as certain as his ultimate failure.

For Marius too, success is inevitable. His flow of language, however meaningless and repetitive, expresses what everyone feels, and each interprets it in his own way. He is articulate where the villagers can only express a vague sense of the ineffable. He is a mirror to their minds, and as Matthias points out, "when a man looks in the mirror, he is quickly enchanted." He is a Christ figure (Anti-Christ posing as Christ)—"a man like us"—everybody's personal saviour. Not even the doctor is proof against his self-intoxicated vision. After all, he has left the town for the same reasons as Marius gives for attacking it, and is also tempted to accept the destruction of the cable railway as a sign. The ambiguity goes deeper, for Marius and Mother Gisson are akin. Marius is a dispossessed Mother Gisson, and his teaching is often so close to the "truth" as held by Mother Gisson and the doctor, that it is difficult to combat in the minds of the villagers. He shares Mother Gisson's intuitions, and her intimacy with earth and mountain. He takes over passionately the elemental myths, and like Mother Gisson is

* "Hitler : A Study in Tyranny" by Alan Bullock. Odhams, London, 1953.

"called" by the mountain. The doctor excuses Marius—"only a fool"—and asks: "Isn't it the fundamental genius of the human soul that breaks out in the speech of a madman?" He is frequently inclined to agree when appealed to by Marius, hesitating between inclination and rejection. Elsewhere he accepts Wentner's analysis of the human predicament, yet Wentner had it from Marius and accepts Marius' cure. "Something dangerous, but also right" the doctor concludes: he too would like to share in the rebirth. Only when the evil results are blatant does his humanity revolt.

For the actual effects of what Marius preaches are the opposite of his promises. Concrete evil comes of abstract good. He guaranteed justice, but Irmgard, a young girl ripe for motherhood, is butchered in a futile drunken sacrifice which brings more guilt. Wetchy, the insurance agent, who for all his timidity is kind and generous, lives in fear of his life, threatened and insulted. Finally he is attacked, tied to a tree, and beaten up by the village youths. The boy Leonhard is needlessly killed in the old mine workings in a futile attempt to reach the gold. Agathe, who will bear Gilbert's child, is threatened if she seeks alimony. The more Marius preaches love, the more intense becomes the hatred. As for his cult of chastity, he gives power to the lecherous grinning Wenzel, impurity itself. The only person to gain is the practical unscrupulous Lax, who supports the gold-mine scheme, so that the dull-witted Krimuss will finance it, thereby lose the mortgage on his farm and forfeit it to Lax. Under cover of an empty doctrine and its high-flown abstractions, work the cynical and money-seeking, who simply use the "leader" for their own ends. The allegory is clear in its essential implications.

No such brief account of the main thesis can do justice to the rich texture of so complex a book. The skilful use of symbols, parallels and irony underlines and at the same time modifies the main themes. Tone and emphasis vary, leaving much that is suggested rather than explained. The ambiguity of attitude is maintained, but varying emphasis permits dominant judgements. Broch is presenting moral issues that cannot be clear-cut. This ambiguity is typified by the doctor's attitude to poor Wetchy: he shares the villagers' repugnance, while acknowledging the little man's goodness. Nor is it ever quite clear how far relative injustice can be tolerated in view of a wisdom beyond time. For total justice can never be achieved

on earth. At the end of the novel, Marius is on the village council, unflinching by the wrong he has effected and possessed by the same ideas, which will lead to greater wrong. Yet the effect of Mother Gisson's timeless reunion on the mountain reduces Marius to total unimportance.

The doctor's postscript emphasises this, but also emphasises the wrong done to Wetchy—he is finally driven away for good. This wrong remains unexpiated. Wetchy is a victim of that "original indifference" ("Urgleichgültigkeit"), which was the theme of "The Innocents", and which is symbolised at one point in "The Tempter" by a placid conversation which continues while a stuck pig screams endlessly in the background. Morec rimes will ensue. At the very end, immediately after Mother Gisson's death, a baby son is born to Agathe. Mother Gisson, the earth-mother, is the spiritual mother of this child, for before her death she had initiated Agathe into her age-old wisdom. The doctor feels that this son will prove to be the true redeemer. The reader may not share this hope; without it, "The Tempter" presents evil as radical and ineradicable. But for Broch, a work of art is a work of salvation. His novel closes on a note of peace and hope.

Time has conceived and the great Sequence of the ages starts afresh. Justice, the Virgin, comes back to dwell with us, and the rule of Saturn is restored. The Firstborn of the New age is already on his way from high heaven down to earth.—*Eclogues* (x ; 70, 75).

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF INTEGRAL EDUCATION OF SRI AUROBINDO

NARENDRA KUMAR DAS GUPTA

Before venturing to explore the Psychological background of the view of integral education of Sri Aurobindo it is essential to write a few lines on the current educational system and its psychological background.

Education was, in the past, mere book-learning, putting into the brain of the child as much information as possible. The reason for this wrong approach to education was the insufficient knowledge about the psychology of the child's personality. The child was considered to be a complete man but only of smaller size. This resulted in tyranny on the child in the name of education. The rapid progress in psychology in modern days has emancipated the child from this unhappy state.

It is now a well-known fact that the child is not a man in miniature but a man in making. This knowledge has made the education of the child *formative* instead of *instructive*. The child is in the formative period of his life, and as such, the major development of his personality is to be achieved during this period.

This new conception has brought about a radical change in the aim of education. In fact, the aim of modern education is the harmonious development of the child's life in its physical, intellectual, emotional, volitional, and moral aspects. But is this the whole description of the total child?

It was Dr. Sigmund Freud who, by his epoch-making discovery of the unconscious mind, has thrown a flood of light on this problem. He declares that just behind this surface mind on the other side of man's conscious personality there lies hidden another movement of the unconscious mind of which the surface mind knows nothing. Behind the surface personality there lies hidden another aspect of man's personality whose actions and motives, though they cannot be known by ordinary means, influence the outer behaviour to a large extent. This study of man's personality by the psycho-analytical

school has been very helpful to modern education. In fact, man's conscious behaviour is a very inadequate description of his personality, unless his inner or unconscious motives and urges are taken into account. In spite of the modification and changes in the behaviour of the surface mind of man or his surface personality by means of education, society, moral conversion, religion and so on, he very often feels himself helplessly drifted away by the forces and things over which he has no control. This is because there is no real integration of the different aspects of his total personality. Man's ego is in constant conflict with Id and super ego. Evidently, the psychology of human personality is more complex than it was thought of before Dr. Freud's time.

If we are to emphasise that the final goal of education is the development of an integral personality in man then the task of education is not so easy a job. The development of character, which is taken to be one of the major aims of modern education, cannot be thought of unless the subconscious mind (the abode of Id) which is the sink and sewer of human nature is thoroughly purified. Dr. Freud pointed out the harmful effect of suppression and repression as a man's purification, and spoke of sublimation in this connection. But the question is, can a radical change and purification of human nature be effected by means of the process of sublimation? Admitting that through the process of sublimation there has been a channeling of instinctive energies to something very higher and elevated form, is there any guarantee that there would be no reverting to its original animal form again? In fact, it is seen often that a man of very high culture and bearing does something wrong. Even the saints have their fall. Did not Viswamitra, one of the greatest of Indian sages, fall from the height of his sadhana in a moment's allurements? Had there been a perfect purification of inner and outer nature there would have been no such degradation and fall. Why do we see so frequently that even prominent persons in different fields of human activities and thoughts consciously or unconsciously commit mistakes for which not only they but also the whole country or nation suffer (the name of Adolf Hitler may be cited as an example). The fact is that culture is yet mostly an external fact with the mark of learning, but has to become an inner fact of character, and that is what education has to achieve. Indeed we cannot remain content with the outer polish and must root out the inner savage within.

Freud's sublimation, which is an unconscious process, is not the solution. What is required is the complete transformation of the blind biological forces that lie hidden in the dark subconscious region of the human mind which is largely responsible for much of our illness—both physical and mental. Groddeck traces to the unconscious mind not only neurotic troubles and the conventional headache, but also the major diseases of the human race.

Let us see in this connection the findings of Dr. Jung who may be called the next notable psychologist after Freud in the investigation of human personality and mind. Jung has made a farther advance on Dr. Freud in maintaining that there are deeper layers of unconscious mind than what was conceived of by Freud. In exploring the mental structure Freud has mentioned three layers of mind,—the conscious, the preconscious and the unconscious. Dr. Jung, who has taken a much wider and extensive view of the unconscious, protests against Freud's conception of the unconscious as the mere habitat of repressed material from the conscious mind. Jung demonstrated through his psycho-therapeutic practice the reality of spirit and concluded that man's greatest sin is unconscious. To release him from his unconscious, according to Jung, is the most important task of education and culture. Evolution, says Jung, consists in the enlargement of consciousness. He affirms a 'centre' different from the ego. Finding all the available explanations of personality unsatisfactory, Jung persists in his own search for one, and at last declares that there is "a Psychic centre of personality that is not identical with the 'I'." In fact, Jung became conscious of the limitation of the present knowledge of personality.

So we find that although Dr. Jung went ahead of Dr. Freud and others in revealing the different layers and depth of human consciousness and personality, he seemed to fail to get the vision of the total range of human mind and personality; and from his statement above it may be said that in the long run he became sceptical.

Here the writer likes to draw the attention of the modern psychologists to the views of Sri Aurobindo in regard to the psychology of human mind and personality. Sri Aurobindo, though not a professional psychologist, seems to start from where Dr. Jung had stumbled. Like Jung Sri Aurobindo says that evolution consists in the enlargement of consciousness. But whereas Jung could not

envisage the possibility of a higher form of consciousness, Sri Aurobindo affirms the existence of such a higher form of consciousness, namely, *Super-consciousness*, above our ordinary consciousness. Jung considers the present human consciousness as the *final* product of evolution. But this goes against the very nature of the evolutionary process. We may reasonably expect that there may be a form of consciousness higher than ordinary consciousness of man as there is consciousness lower than it in the animal and plant kingdom.

Sri Aurobindo's work on human personality and mind with its different layers of consciousness has gone far ahead of the present-day conception of the western psychologists on these. Gestalt psychology has pointed out and demonstrated the usefulness of the study and observation of a phenomenon taking an entire view, and this has been a great achievement in the field of psychology; still its study of the whole is confined to the horizontal level or one dimension. Dr. Freud, with much credit, worked on the human mind in its two dimensions,—conscious and unconscious. But Sri Aurobindo has investigated and worked on consciousness in its four dimensions,—Inconscient, Sub-conscient, Conscient and Super-conscient. According to him, there is nothing absolutely unconscious, even the material particle is not unconscious. He calls such a state of consciousness Inconscient (consciousness in sleeping state). Sri Aurobindo's concept of the Inconscient at the lowest end of the consciousness and the Super-conscient at the highest is, indeed, full of mystery, and indicates a great possibility of investigation into these two domains of consciousness.

So from the above we may say that Sri Aurobindo's concept of mind and consciousness is more extensive and inclusive than that of the western psychologists. Dr. Jung was about to posit the existence of a higher consciousness, but he confused it with the lower sub-consciousness as both, being the extremes, appeared alike to him. So he says "I am unable to separate an unconscious below from the unconscious above". If we keep in our mind the final goal of education as the development of the whole man,—meaning thereby his personality perfectly integrated, then, certainly Sri Aurobindo has gone far ahead in this respect. His concept of human mind and consciousness is far wider and more inclusive, and as such, he has taken a more *wholistic* view of personality than was ever conceived of.

So with this knowledge and positive experience of the *whole*

range of human mind and personality Sri Aurobindo has formulated his system of education now known as *Integral Education*. According to him man is not a homogeneous being but a being of multiple personalities,—physical, vital, mental and psychical. Sometimes we identify ourselves with body, sometimes with vital urges, desire or passion and sometimes with mind,—when our physical, vital and mental personality comes to upper hand respectively, each becomes active in its own turn at different moments, as if there were three men living inside one man having no unitary organisation among them. This is not homogeneity but heterogeneity. But is there, then, no unitary principle in man? Sri Aurobindo has given us a very definite and clear answer to this. According to him our psyche, the central personality remains hidden or covered by these outer envelopes,—mind, vital being, and physical body. As the psyche in most of the people lies practically inactive in the background, these forces of our *pseudo* personalities,—physical, vital and mental are almost at anarchy. Now the central theme of *Integral* education of Sri Aurobindo lies in the task of awakening the sleeping Psyche, bringing it to the forefront and giving it the full control of life. How can this be done? This is achieved when our *empirical* 'I', which stands on the false identification of *self* either with the body or with the vital or the mind, is made to disappear from the scene. Then the real 'I', the Psyche comes to the front and spreads its influence over the whole being. Its control once established, our decision is always in the right direction; because it (Psyche) is the seat of higher or *Super-consciousness*, which is ever illuminated and has constant communication with *Divine* consciousness. When its influence thus gradually spreads from within towards the outer sheaths, (physical, vital and mental) there takes place the transformation of the whole being. In this process of transformation there is no room for neglect or repression of any part of our being, but each part (physical or vital or mental) must be developed to its highest perfection and integration with the central truth, the Psyche. With this fullest vision of the total man Sri Aurobindo has visualised the future education of mankind. This education is broadly divided into five parts, namely,—Physical education, education of the Vital, mental education, Psychic education and Spiritual education. Discussion of these divisions is out of place here, in this paper, particularly when the detailed description of these has been given in the recently published book, 'Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Education'.

In the conclusion, it needs emphasis again that if perfect integration of man's different aspects of personality round his central self be the goal of education, then *Psyche* inside man as revealed by Sri Aurobindo is yet awaiting scientific investigation. Sri Aurobindo's revelation of *Psyche*, as the true individuality of human being, may be considered on the basis of yogic findings ; but science of Psychology may take inspiration and help from the yogic findings, instead of rejecting them as mysticism. For, after all, both Sri Aurobindo and the Yogi want to know and reveal the real nature of human personality, mind, and consciousness, their relation with universal forces and cosmic consciousness. Moreover, if for the investigation of the real nature of universal physical forces modern physicists are now inclined to collect data which are *supra-physical* in nature why should not the modern Psychologist include the *supra-normal* mental phenomena into his field of investigation ?

It is high time at the present crisis of the world civilization that the Psychologists and the educationists should turn their attention to the investigation of the inner aspect of human nature. Modern science has placed at the disposal of mankind tremendous force and power but all these powers and forces of scientific discoveries and inventions their vast amenities are being usurped by the Ego for the satisfaction of its appetites. We have now raised loud clamour as to how to save the mankind from total annihilation. The writer believes that the real solution does not lie only in political understanding of co-existence, social co-operation, world citizenship, and so on, but much more in imparting to mankind a knowledge that is not confined to ordinary surface consciousness only but also comes from the illuminated higher consciousness of the *innerself*. The task of education is to prepare the ground for this; and the writer has reasons to believe that the view of Integral education of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother is based on adequate psychological principles.

A NOTE ON HUMOUR IN SANSKRIT LITERATURE

S. BHATTACHARYA

As early as Bharata, the earliest extant author of dramaturgy, humour (hāsyā) was duly recognised as a sentiment (rasa). Indeed, while enumerating the number of sentiments (VI. 16) his Nāṭya-śāstra assigns to humour a place next only to the sentiment of love (śṛṅgāra) which, being the sublimated expression of the primordial instinct of sex (rati), legitimately occupies the first place in his list. The great Kashmirian interpreter, Abhinavagupta, while commenting upon the definition of humour as adduced by Bharata (Nāṭya-śāstra Baroda edn. vol. I 1926 p 313), suggests a line of demarcation between love and humour from the point of aesthetic appeal. While the sentiment of love, he observes, emerges as a result of the operation of the appropriate extraneous conditions (vibhāva etc.) the conditions that evoke humour constitute as well part and parcel of the sentiment (hāsyā) itself. In other words, a situation is humorous not only because it stimulates humour but also because the situation itself is integrated into the sentiment of humour. This suggests that Abhinava recognised that the emotional response to a humorous situation was spontaneous while the sentiment of love requires for its origin the intervention of intellectual appraisal. However, the later rhetoricians (vide Kāvya-prakāśa 6th edn. Poona 1950 p 94) recognised the conditions (vibhāva etc.) of sentiments in general to form ingredients of the respective sentiments. That is to say, the conditions of a sentiment, whether humour or any other sentiment, were taken to form an integral part of its complex structure. Yet Abhinava's aforesaid plea for humour when compared to the sentiment of love may be interpreted at least as a recognition of its ready appeal to the audience in general.

The employment of humour in literature deserves interesting consideration. To begin with, classical Sanskrit literature is now generally traced to the two Great Epics of India—the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata. Of the two, the Rāmāyaṇa is taken to be an epic of art i. e., a composition having unity of thought, while

the Mahābhārata is regarded as an epic of growth i. e., more or less a collection through different centuries. Nevertheless the fact remains that the Mahābhārata attained its present form by the second century A. D. at the latest i. e., before the bulk of classical literature was brought into existence. And the Rāmāyaṇa is generally taken to be still earlier. Now, both the Epics possess emotional elements which may legitimately be categorised as humour, pathos and love. Yet the tragic end of both the Epics remains undisputed. This has given ground to as great a rhetorician as Ānandavardhana to propound pathos (karuṇa) to be the sentiment in the Rāmāyaṇa (Dvanyāloka I. 5 Śokaḥ ślokatvam āgataḥ) while the Mahābhārata, according to him, breathes the sentiment of tranquillity (śānta-rasa) (*ibid* IV Kashi Sanskrit Series 1940 p 533 śānto raso mahābhāratasya aṅgitvena vivakṣitaḥ iti supradipāditam). The remarks of Ānandavardhana lend colour to the view that the two Epics, as representing transitional literature between the Vedic and the classical, are primarily didactic in tone with permeating air of otherworldliness, amounting to the negation of joys of life on the earth. (cf. Ānandavardhana's statement at the same page:—mokṣalakṣaṇa evaikaḥ paraḥ puruṣārthaḥ śāstranaye kāvya-naye ca).

Of the pre-Kālidāśian poets Aśvaghoṣa maintained the moralistic tone of the Epics. Aśvaghoṣa set his hand to literature with a definite purpose. Literature was intended to be a vehicle for the propagation of certain Buddhist philosophy and religion to which he was pledged. He brought to bear upon his composition the burden of his scholarship and poetic technique culled, among others, from the two Epics. Although his composition abounds in poetic qualities yet, in conformity with his genius and the influences working on him, the predominant tone of composition was sublime and didactic. Aśvaghoṣa may therefore be said to have maintained the tradition handed down from the Vedas through the two Epics.

Bhāsa appears to be the first to have heralded a new era in the field of Sanskrit literature. His dramas roused at a time a lot of lively interest among the scholars who wrangled for some time over the issue, among others, whether Bhāsa came before Kālidāśa or after. They now seem to have been reconciled to the view that Bhāsa preceded Kālidāśa. Bhāsa's Svapna-vāsavadatta introduces for the first time the element of humour as characterised in the jester (vidūṣaka) of the king, Udayana. A simple fellow with insatiable

lust for food, the jester provides in the drama food for humour (Svapna-vāsavadatta Act II opening passages). Bhāṣa's Avimāraka, another drama, paints the jester as an illiterate fellow trying to pass off as a scholar (Avimāraka Act III kasmāt aham avaidikaḥ ? śṛṇu tāvat. Asti rāmāyaṇam nāma nāṭya-śāstram. tasmin pañca ślokā asampūrṇe saṁvatsare mayā paṭhitāḥ). Apart from the character of the jester, Bhāṣa experimented with humour in situation. In Madhyamavyāyoga, for instance, Bhīma, the father, is imprisoned by the son, Ghaṭotkaca, and is taken to the mother Hidimbā, the Rākṣasī, for her dinner. The drama ends when the mother recognises her husband and the son is put to unfathomable shame. The whole of the drama is therefore wrought upon the stage against the background of humour which imparts a special relish to the main sentiment of heroism (vīra-rasa).

Kālidāsa is the golden fruit of Bhāṣa's world which found its maturity under the aegis of the Imperial Guptas (400 A.D.). It was the age of renaissance which declared the victory of the new which added colour and significance to what was good in the old. It was a reassessment of old values. Free thinking was the order of the day. The sumtotal of the result was the assertion of life on this earth, and all that it stands for. In a word the old classicism with overarching religious orthodoxy was replaced by romanticism. Kālidāsa, as the true product of the age, sang the songs of love through his dramas, lyric and the epics. The old claim of Śānta to be regarded as a rasa, as recorded by Ānandavardhana in connection with the Mahābhārata, did not find much of favour. Bharata seems to have been caught by these new ideas as his omission of Sāntarasa from the list of rasas bears testimony to the point, although he deals with it separately last of all just to recognise its bare existence outside the dramas.

But as a true product of renaissance Kālidāsa forged a synthesis between the new approach to life and old values. He recognised the demands of the instinct of love but, at the same time, he would not tolerate its unfettered expression which denies the social and the moral laws or thwarts the sense of duty. To Kālidāsa a thing was beautiful and a joy for ever because it was good and beneficial. Free expression of instinct, whether in married life or otherwise, is therefore a fall and has to be decried by the wrath of heaven and has to be crystallised by separation and

repentance before it can attain the glory of the beautiful and the good. In the synthesis of the beautiful and the good, Kālidāsa therefore made an improvement on Bhāsa who was more or less satisfied with life as it is and did not look beyond to life as it should be. Through the synthesis Kālidāsa reasserted the moral value which thus obtained a new lease of life. The drama Nāgānanda is an example on this point.

Humour began its career as the chambermaid of the sentiment of love. Abhinavagupta while explaining the order in which Bharata enumerates the rasas in his Nāṭyaśāstra recognises this fact (Nāṭyaśāstra p 269 sarvān prati hr̥dyatā iti pūrvaṃ śṛṅgāraḥ tad-anugamī ca hāsyah) that humour is conducive to love. Kālidāsa employs, with unique success, humour as a device to soften the rigour of love—often to blast away the seriousness of a situation—from the gamut of a smile to uproarious laughter. But humour was important though playing a subordinate role in the love dramas. It found due recognition at the hand of the rhetoricians who, as stated above, considered it next only to love, the first sentiment. Kālidāsa culled the skeletons of humour from Bhasa, reconditioned the structure, clothed it with flesh and blood and breathed a wonderful life into it. Kālidāsa's Vidūṣaka (jester), for example, is not a mere sketch but a living being having vigour, fullness and details of life. He is a character by himself. Kālidāsa extends the frontiers of humour by including situations, dialogues and what not in its fold. Indeed his works (the dramas) attained a splendour by the explosion of humour just as his cloud-messenger was imbued with a special beauty with lightning.

In the history of its evolution humour has retained its original connection with the sentiment of love. Humour therefore figures predominantly in the drama where either heroism (vira) or love (śṛṅgāra) is prescribed to be the main sentiment. It may be interesting to trace in this context the evolution of Sanskrit literature and the position of rasa therein. This will bring the position of humour to a clearer relief. The Sanskrit literary critics seem to have started with the presupposition that the drama (nāṭya) and the literature (kāvyā) are two different types of literary activities having different aims in view. While the drama aims at the creation of a sentiment a literature should aim at poetic embellishments (alaṃkāra etc.). That is why Bharata and Dhanañjaya wrote on the drama only while Bhāmaha, Daṇḍin and Rudraṭa, to name

a few, wrote on *Alaṃkāra*, *guṇa* or *rīti* which they thought to be appropriate to literature (*kāvya*) as the names of their works---*Kāvyaālaṃkāra*, *Kāvyaadarśa*, *Kāvyaālaṃkāra-sūtra-vṛtti*, would indicate. To consider the *Kāvya* and the *Nāṭya* as two different streams is also echoed in the *Kāvya-prakāśa* (1200 A. D.) (Kav. Pra. IV. 27 *nāṭya-kāvyaoh*) until in the *Sāhitya-darpaṇa* (1400 A. D.) the two varieties are merged into the general category of the *Kāvya*, the drama being visible (*dr̥śya*) and the other the literary composition being audible (*śravya*) (VI. I).

Although Bharata claimed *rasa* to be the special and exclusive privilege of the drama yet he dealt also with *alaṃkāras* as necessary for a drama. Conversely Bhāmaha recognised *rasa* as an *alaṃkāra* (*rasavat-alaṃkāra*) though he claimed *alaṃkāras* to form the essence of literature (*kāvya*). In this way the unconscious process of mingling together the *rasa* and the *alaṃkāras* continued with the poets until *rasa* forced its way into literature and found recognition as the essence of literature as well. This naturally gave rise to an assessment of all literary values, which involved the questions of their mutual relationship. Ānandavardhana's *Dhvanyāloka* is the first of its kind to engage itself with this appraisal. By the time of the *Kāvya-prakāśa* *rasa* had established its sovereignty both over the drama and the literature. But in this parade of the *rasas* in literature (*kāvya*) how did humour fare? Apart from its solitary ramble, mainly, in the stray verses, humour always chose to remain in its native land, the dramas, and there also, as stated above, closely associated with the sentiment of love.

But apart from its subordinate role humour has sometimes attained independent status. In the *Prahasana*, for example, which is a special variety of major dramas, humour figures as the main sentiment. Viśvanātha, the author of the *Sāhitya-darpaṇa*, mentions *Kandarpa-keli* and *Dhūrta-carita* as examples on this point. Similarly, in the *Nāṭya-rasaka*, a species of minor dramas (*uparūpakas*), humour plays the role of the main sentiment. The same author cites *Narmavatī* and *Vilāsavatī*, a two-act and a four-act play respectively as examples. Though compositions with humour as the main sentiment are not many and the names, cited above, are lost in oblivion, yet they are enough to bear testimony to the fact that the evolution of humour in Sanskrit literature had eventually attained a stage when it claimed to be regarded as a sentiment independent of other sentiments, like the sentiment of love. Among the later dramas humour plays as important a role as the sentiment of love. The example is the *Mṛcchakaṭika* by the King Śūdraka.

Bharata has recognised oddity in garments, ornaments, behaviour, fickleness etc. to be the evoking causes (vibhāvas) of humour. It finds expression (anubhāvas) through the movement of lips, nostrils and cheeks, through the contraction and expansion of eyes and so on. Faked distractions in other matters (avañitthā), lethargy, drowsiness, lack of sleep appear and disappear (vyubhicāri-bhāvas) to add further relish to the main ingredient (sthāyibhāva) of laughter (hāsa).

Bharata has classified humour according to the quality of the persons possessed by it. The best of men (uttamas) have "smita" and "hasita". The mediocres (madhyamas) resort to "vihasita" and "uphasita" while the lowly (adhamas) fall victims to "apahasita" and "atihhasita". "Smita" and "hasita" consist of smile in which the teeth are not seen at all or at best slightly exposed. "Vihasita" and "upahasita" are accompanied with noise, oblique glances and contraction of shoulders and the head. Finally, "apahasita" and "atihhasita" are varieties of boisterous laughter which finds violent expression through tearful eyes, hoarse voice and convulsive limbs (VI. 56-74).

Humour in Sanskrit literature is mainly confined to innocent laughter. It has scarcely taken the shape of irony or satire. Address to a foe:—"Thank you, Sir, for all that you have done for me. You have established your innate goodness by all this. Please continue in the way you have been doing. May you have a happy life for hundred of years" (Kāvya-prakāśa IV. verse 4); the angry statement of Bhīma for the passivity of Yudhiṣṭhira in spite of all the troubles that the brothers and their wife, Draupadī, have undergone at the hand of Duryodhana:—"Though the modesty of Draupadī was thus outraged in the open royal court, though we have since been rambling in the forests clad in the birch of trees, though we had to undergo all sorts of humiliations in the house of Virāṭ, though I have to put up with all this, my eldest brother (Yudhiṣṭhira) is not the least affected by these wrongs" (Veṇī-saṁhāra Act. I); the statement of Draupadī with a profound undertone of sorrow: "If in face of all these troubles, Oh King, you still do not move an inch to take necessary action then the right thing for you would be to grow hair on the head and to pour oblations on fire for securing a good place in heaven" (Bhāravi Canto I):—are examples of satire. The artificial quarrel between Cāṇakya and Candragupta

as a device to deceive others possesses elements designed to be mistaken as a case for satire in the *Mudrā-rākṣasa*.

In its own sphere humour seems to have assumed manifold form. Humour in *character* has been almost personified in the concept of the jester, as indicated above. The jester, as painted by Kālidāsa, is a perennial source of joy and revelry. A constant companion of the emperor, Duṣyanta, the life of the jester is a dedication to delicacies especially to sweets. A slow-witted fellow—hardly recognisable to have been born in the heritage of that great Cānakya—the jester is full of vivacity and delightful remarks. Coward and harmless, licensed to go anywhere in the royal palace and to utter anything he likes, he is an object of pity and a laughing-stock of all. In short, every inch of him evokes humour, his single movement or gesture is no exception to it. (*Śāṅkuntala* Act II etc). The *Mṛcchakaṭika* has introduced, besides the jester, the concept of Śakāra. He is a person of questionable birth with filthy habits and manners. A confirmed illiterate, he possesses the vanity of high connections and can unscrupulously employ his cunningness to realise his motive and stoop as low as he feels to be required by the circumstances.

Humour of *situation* has been a popular device in Sanskrit love dramas. The *Mālavikāgnimitra* and the *Ratnāvalī* are examples on this issue. The comedy of errors resulting from clever devices by the royal attendants often heightens the effect of a humorous situation. Humour based on *pun* has created a mirthful atmosphere in the *Mṛcchakaṭika*. The conversation between the jester of Cārudatta and the servant of Vasantasena runs as follow:- (In order to announce the arrival of Vasantasena at the house of Cārudatta). The servant: Do you know who protects prosperous villages? The jester: Why, the roads? The servant (with a smile): No, my dear. The jester feels confused and turns to Cārudatta. Cārudatta: "senā" (army), my dear. The jester returns with a gusto and shouts: You silly man, "senā". This conversation is preceded by another set of questions and : answers in which the last answer was "vasanta". Now, the servant: Put them together and pronounce. The jester: sena-vasanta. The servant: Turn and say. Jester (making an about turn physically) sena-vasant. The servant: You fool, change the padas (which means both "words" and "feet") and say. The jester: (cross-legged) sena-vasanta. etc. (Act V) Writers did not spare even religious themes from the pale of humour. Śarvilaka is the son of a

Brahmin. He is in love with a girl and to please her with ornaments digs a hole in the house of Cārudatta at night. He wanted to create a piece of art in the making of the hole. He suddenly discovers the great utility of the sacrificial thread when fumbling over a measuring tape which he has forgotten to bring: "Sacrificial thread is really a great help especially for persons like me". He exclaims, "It can help in measurement on the walls; with its aid one can take away the ornaments worn on the body; one can also release latch with its help; when stung by insects or snakes in course of action one can also use it as a bandage." (Mṛcchakaṭika Act. III. verse 16). Stray verses collected in the "subhāṣitas" provide excellent food for mirth and humour. The rural doctor says to the priest: "You did not chant the Caṇḍīstotra nor did I treat the fellow. Then how could he die at all?" "Even the gods fear the powerful. They make a feast of the poor son of a she-goat; but they shun the horse, the elephant and never lay their hands on the tiger". "A teacher never faces any difficulty with any text if only he knows the art of evasion. When confronted by the students let him say "go ahead", or "the time is up", or "it will be clearer later on." "The goddess of wealth lives in the lotus floating on water; Lord Siva lives upon the snow-clad mountain of the Himalayas; Lord Hari dwells upon the ocean of milk. Do you know why? Surely, they do so for fear of bugs."

বাংলা

ইতিহাস কি ?

প্রভাতকুমার মুখোপাধ্যায়

জন্ম-মৃত্যু বিয়ে তিন বিধাতা নিয়ে—তেমনি স্থান-কাল-পাত্র—ইতিহাস এই তিন নিয়ে। স্থান কাল ও পাত্র—এই তিনটি যেখানে অবিচ্ছিন্নভাবে অঙ্গাঙ্গিভাবে জমেছে—সেখানে ইতিহাসের জন্ম। স্থানের কথা ভূগোলার বিষয়, সমতলীয় ক্ষেত্রে আধুনিক পৃথিবীর বিজ্ঞান সেখানে আলোচনা ও গবেষণার বিষয়। স্থানের সঙ্গে কালের যোগে যে জ্ঞানোদয় হয়, তাকে বলা হয়েছে ভূতত্ত্ব বা জিওলজি। ভূ-ত্বকে যেসব জীব বাস ও বিচরণ করে, তারা পাত্র—খেচর, ভূচর, জলচর, উভচর; এদের মধ্যে সেরা হচ্ছে মানুষ—সে সর্বচর,—জল-স্থল-আকাশ কোথাও চলবার তার বাধা নেই।* এই ভূত্বকবাসী যেমন আছে—তেমন-থাকা মানুষের কথা বলা হয় যে শাস্ত্রে—তাকে বলা হয় নৃতত্ত্ব বা অ্যানথ্রপোলজি। স্থান ও কালের মধ্যে মানুষকে যখন দেখা যায় বা জানা যায়, তখনই তাকে বলা হয় ইতিহাস।

মানুষ সামাজিক জীব হলো তখন, যেদিন তার কথা ফুটলো; শব্দের দ্বারা, ইঙ্গিতের দ্বারা আপনার ভাবনা অতের বোধগম্য করে ব্যক্ত করতে পারলো, সেদিন থেকেই তার সমাজ-জীবনের পত্তন, তার ইতিহাসের সূত্রপাত। ভূত্বকের নানা স্থানে, নানা শব্দের দ্বারা একই ভাবকে প্রকাশ করতে করতে নানা ভাষা সৃষ্টি হলো। মানুষ একই স্থানে একই সময়ে ‘মানুষ’ হয়নি; নানা স্থানে বিশেষ প্রাকৃতিক পরিবেশের ও জলবায়ুর পরিবর্তনের ঘাত-প্রতিঘাতে মানুষ বাঙময় হয়েছিল। এই শব্দ বা বাক্য মানুষ যখন আরম্ভ করেছিল তখন থেকেই যৌথ কাজের জন্ম, সম্মিশ্রিত সূত্রপাত—আর এক সঙ্গে চলতে চলতে সমাজ হলো। কমিউনিকেশন বা বাণ্-বিনিময় শক্তি, কর্পোরেশন বা সমবায় নীতি মানুষকে অত্যাগ প্রাণী থেকে পৃথক করেছে। সকল ধর্মশাস্ত্রকারই আদিতে বাক্, লোগোস বা word ছিল বলেছেন—বোধ হয় এই ধারণা থেকেই।

আদিমানব ছিল প্রাকৃতিক পরিবেশের দাস; তাই সেই মানুষের ইতিহাস আলোচনা করতে গেলে তার জন্মভূমি এই ধরিত্রীকে বাদ দেওয়া যায় না—যেমন ছবি থেকে ছবির ক্যানভাস বা কাগজকে পৃথক করা যায় না। যে ধরিত্রী মানুষকে ধারণ করে রেখেছে, পোষণ ও পালন করেছে, অর্থাৎ খাত দিয়ে পুষ্ট করেছে এবং পাল ও দল বৃদ্ধি করতে, বিস্তারিত হয়ে পড়তে সহায়তা করেছে—সেই ধরিত্রীকে বাদ দিয়ে ইতিহাস অধ্যয়ন ও অধ্যাপনা হয় না।

কতকগুলি বিচ্ছিন্ন ঘটনা ছাত্রদের সামনে আমরা ধরি—যার সঙ্গে বাস্তবের বা আদর্শবাদের কোনোই প্রায় যোগ নেই ; আমরা বড়রা ও বুড়োরা পুরাতন ধারায় শিক্ষিত বলে মনে করি কতকগুলি ঘটনা সম্বন্ধে সংবাদ সরবরাহ করে দিলে ছাত্রদের জ্ঞান বাড়বে,—তাদের উপকার হবে। বর্তমান দুনিয়া থেকে সেসব ঘটনা যে কত দূর-কত অবাস্তব ও অর্থহীন তা আমরা ভাল করে ভেবেই দেখি না। আমরা ভুলে যাই, ছাত্রদের তৈরী করতে হবে ভাবীকালের জ্ঞান—ভবিষ্যতের নাগরিক হবে তারা। ছাত্ররা অতীতের পুনরুক্তি নয়, এমন কি আমাদের যুগের পুনরাবির্ভাবও নয়। স্রোতস্বিনী নদী যদি থেমে তার পিছনের জঞ্জালের মধ্যে কি আছে দেখবার জ্ঞান দাঁড়ায়, তবে সে ধারা মজে যায়—ব্যর্থ হয়ে যায় তার নদী-জন্ম। ঘটনার আবর্জনায় শিশু-মন মলিন ও স্নান হয়ে ওঠে—তারপর সে মনের উপর আলো আর প্রতিফলিত হয় না।

ভূগোলের মানচিত্রে দেখা যায়, বিশেষ রঙ-করা কতকগুলি রাজ্য : এই রঙমাখা রাজ্যগুলি ইতিহাসে জলবুদুদের মত ফুটেছে ও ফাটুছে। তাই বিংশ শতকের গোড়ার মানচিত্র—এখন পুরাতন পঞ্জিকার স্থায়ী অচল ; যাঁরা ইতিহাসের ঠিকুজি তৈরী করতে চান, তাঁদেরই প্রয়োজন হয় এই মানচিত্রের ; তখন তার নাম হয় ঐতিহাসিক মানচিত্র—ম্যাপের ফসিল্। এককালে ভৌগোলিক বাধা ছিল পর্বতপ্রমাণ ও মানুষে মানুষে ব্যবধান ছিল সাগর সমান। পৃথিবীর পাহাড় দুর্লভ্য, সমুদ্র দুস্তর, মরুভূমি দুর্গম, অরণ্য দুর্ভেদ্য ; এর উপর শীত, গ্রীষ্ম বর্ষার পীড়ন ; ঝড়ঝপা, প্রভঞ্জন, টাইফুনের উৎপাত। এই সমস্তের সঙ্গে লড়াই করে মানুষ জয়ী হয়েছে—তার একটা জিনিসের জন্ম—যা আর কোন জীবের মধ্যে নেই বললেই চলে—সেটি হচ্ছে মানুষের দুর্জয় মন ও ইচ্ছা, আর জীব-তাত্ত্বিক দিক থেকে খর্বর মধ্যস্থিত ঘিলুর ওজন ও জটিলতা।

মানুষ অস্বাভাবিক প্রাণীর মতই হাতিয়ার-শূন্য হাত নিয়েই পৃথিবীতে আবির্ভূত হয়েছিল। বাঘের নখ, সিংহের থাবা, হাতীর গুঁড়ের শক্তি তার ছিল না। সে মাছের মতো জলে সাঁতার কাটতে পারতো না, পাখীর মতো উড়তে জানতো না। কিন্তু দেখা গেল মানুষের মাথার খুলির মধ্যে বাড়তি পদার্থটার জন্ম সে আজ সকলকে জয় করেছে। সেই বুদ্ধির জোরে তার খালি হাতে এলো হাতিয়ার এবং সে-হাতিয়ার বানানোর কাজ আজও শেষ হয়নি। মানুষের দুটো হাতের দশটা আঙ্গুল কত ছোট, কত দুর্বল। অথচ সেই আঙ্গুল থেকে তৈরি হলো হাতিয়ার—যন্ত্রযুগের স্বত্রপাত। আর সেই হাত দিয়ে বের হলো রেখা, চিত্র, লিপি, অক্ষর ; শুধু বস্তু বর্ণনা নয়, ভাবনার কথা, মনের কথা ব্যক্ত হলো তার সাহিত্যে, দর্শনে। সেই হাত দিয়ে তৈরি হলো ঘর, বাড়ি, মন্দির, প্রাসাদ, দুর্গ অদ্ভুত স্থাপত্য, অতুলনীয় ভাস্কর্য। মানুষের প্রথম মারণ-অস্ত্র ধনুক বাণ যেদিন সে হাতে পেলো, সেদিন দূর থেকে বহু পশু ও শত্রুকে বধ করা তার পক্ষে সম্ভব হলো। মল্লযুদ্ধ, গদা বা ডাণ্ডা দিয়ে পেটাপেটির

তালিকাটা দেখবার মতো, এমন, কি স্থাশনাল ক্যাডেট কোরের ছেলেরা যখন সজ্জকাজে নামে, তখনো তাদের ভাল খেতে দেওয়া হয় বলে শুনেছি। প্রচুর খাদ্য চাই প্রচুর কার্যের জন্ত।

ক্রমবর্ধমান জনতার জন্ত রাষ্ট্রের পক্ষে খাদ্য উৎপাদনের উপযোগী স্থানের চাহিদা থেকে উপনিবেশ বা কলোনির সৃষ্টি। কলোনী থেকে খাদ্য ও অত্যাশ্চর্য শস্ত আনবার জন্ত বণিকী জাহাজের দরকার; সেই বণিকী জাহাজ মাঝদরিয়ার পথে লুটেরাদের হাত থেকে রক্ষা করবার জন্ত জঙ্গী জাহাজকে টেহলদারী করতে হয়। মহাযুদ্ধের সময় সেটা করতে হয়েছিল। এইভাবে এক খাদ্যসমস্যা কেবল করে অসংখ্য সমস্যা জন্মে উঠে রাষ্ট্রের কাজ ও দায়িত্ব বেড়ে চলে। এই কলোনিয়াল সাম্রাজ্য গড়া ও ভাঙ্গার সঙ্গে ভূগোল, ইতিহাস, কৃষি, শিল্প গমনাগমনের ব্যবস্থা ও বাহনাদির সম্বন্ধ অচ্ছেদ্যভাবে যুক্ত।

এই পৃথিবীর ভূত্বক নদী, পর্বত, মরুভূমি, মালভূমি, জলাভূমি ও সমভূমিপূর্ণ। এইসব স্থান অতিক্রম করে রাজা-মহারাজা বিপুল সৈন্য নিয়ে দিগ্বিজয়ে বের হতেন অর্থাৎ দস্যবৃত্তি করতে। কিন্তু সেযুগের পথঘাট খাদ্যবস্তুগুলি বেঁধে বয়ে দিয়ে যাওয়ার পক্ষে অতুল ছিল না; সেটা সংগ্রহ হতো পথে পথে—মূল্য দিয়ে হোক, দস্যবৃত্তি করে হোক। বর্গীর হাঙ্গামা তো বাংলা দেশে প্রবাদগত হয়ে আছে। মারাঠা ঘোড়-সোয়ারের দল বাঙালী চাষীর গলা টিপে ঘোড়ার জন্ত কাঁচা ফসল কেটে নিতো, নইলে ‘বর্গী এলো দেশে’ বলে অমন সুন্দর ছড়া লোকে সুর করে গেয়ে শিশুদের ভয় দেখাতো না।

প্রাচীন জগতে দিগ্বিজয়ের পথের ধারে কিভাবে বাণিজ্যকেন্দ্রিক সভ্যতা গড়ে উঠেছিল, তার একটা উদাহরণমাত্র দেবো। মিশর থেকে এশিয়া ও এশিয়া থেকে মিশর যাওয়া-আসার পথে নীরিয়ার নগরগুলি পড়ে। এই নগরগুলি শিল্প ও ব্যবসায়ের কেন্দ্র হিসাবে খ্যাত হয়েছিল—রাজ্য স্থাপনের মহানাম অর্জন করতে পারেনি; তারা বিস্ত-শালী হয়েছিল অস্ত্র-শস্ত্র খাদ্যদ্রব্য বিক্রয় করে। ডামাস্কাসের শাণিত অস্ত্র জগৎ-বিখ্যাত ছিল।

মেসোপটেমিয়া বা ইউফ্রাতিস-তাইগ্রিস দোয়াব থেকে নীল নদীর উপত্যকা যেতে হলে নাক-বরাবর সোজা যাওয়া যায় না—পথে পড়ে মরুভূমি; তাই ‘উর্বর চন্দ্রকলা’ (fertile crescent) ঘুরে যেতে আসতে হতো সবাইকে। এখন কালান্তরে আকাশপথ দিয়ে সোজাসুজি আসা সহজ হয়ে গেছে।

যাই হোক, প্রাচীন কালে মানুষকে বহু প্রাকৃতিক বাধা এড়িয়ে দেশদেশান্তরে যেতে হতো। এই পথ মোচন করতে করতে পৃথিবীর মানচিত্র আঁকা হলো। গ্রীক সাহসিক জেনোফোন যদি ভাড়াটিয়া সৈন্য নিয়ে পারসিক রাজাদের তাইয়ে-তাইয়ে

লড়াই-এ যোগ দিতে না যেতেন, আর আনাবেসিস বই না লিখতেন, তা হলে আলেকজেন্দারের পক্ষে পশ্চিম এশিয়ায় যুদ্ধাভিযানে বের হওয়া হয়তো সম্ভব হতো না। মার্কো পোলোর বন্ধু কারাগারে বসে যদি পোলোর ভ্রমণ কাহিনী লিপিবদ্ধ না করতেন, তবে কলম্বাসের আমেরিকা আবিষ্কার হয়তো মূর্ত্তুবী থাকতো। ভূগোলের অজ্ঞাত দেশে ইতিহাসের নতুন পাতা লেখা শুরু হলো।

মানুষের মন ব'লে যে-একটা অদৃশ্য সত্তা দেহের মধ্যে আশ্রয় করে আছে, সে সর্বদাই তার পঞ্চ ইন্দ্রিয়ের সাহায্যে ছুনিয়াটাকে পেতে চায়; ইন্দ্রিয়গুলো উশখুশ করে, হাত-পা নিশপিশ করে। তার মনের উশখুশানী থেকে বিজ্ঞানের ও দর্শনের উদ্ভব; তার হাতের নিশপিশানী থেকে যন্ত্রের সৃষ্টি। মানুষের আদিম আবিষ্কার হলো আগুন, কুঠার, চাকা; তারপর চলছে অসংখ্য ক্ষেত্রে তার প্রয়োগ।

আগুন পেলো চকমকি ঠুকে ঠুকে, কাঠে কাঠে ঘষে; কাঠ পুড়িয়ে, পাথর পুড়িয়ে তাপ পেলো, ধাতুর কাজ আরম্ভ হলো। আজ বিদ্যুৎ শক্তি প্রয়োগ করে কঠিনতম ধাতু গলিয়ে ফেলছে, যা পূর্বে হতো না। এইভাবে জয়যাত্রা চলেছে। তামা ও টিন মিশিয়ে ব্রোঞ্জ মিশ্র ধাতু তৈরি করার জন্ম একদিন ব্যবসায়ীরা দেশে দেশে ঘুরেছে তারপর লোহার জন্ম দিকে দিকে খুঁজলো। এখন পেট্রোলিয়াম, বকসাইট, ইউরেনিয়াম, রেয়ার আর্থ প্রভৃতির খোঁজ হচ্ছে। অল্পসন্ধানের শেষ নেই—নিত্যনূতন সামগ্রী তৈরি হচ্ছে।

চাকা আবিষ্কার করে সে গাড়ি বানালো; বহু জন্তকে বশ মানিয়েছিল, এবার তাকে জুতলো গাড়িতে। মানুষের মাথার বোকা থেকে, কাঁধের বোকা চাপলো গাড়িতে—হাত তার মুক্তি পেলো। মানুষ হাঁটতো পথ দিয়ে—রথ চললে—তৈরী হলো রাস্তা, রোড, রাস্ট্র, স্ট্রাসে। রাস্তা দূরকে নিকট করলে।

চাকা থেকে চাক হলো, আগে হাতে-পেটা হাঁড়ি, কলসী, জালা হতো—তার নিদর্শন অনেক পাওয়া গেছে কবর থেকে। চাকের বিত্তা আরও হলে প্রচুর পরিমাণে নানা রকমের মৃৎপাত্র তৈরী হতে থাকলো। মানুষের উদ্ভবস্থ খাণ্ড সঞ্চয় করে রাখবার সুবিধা পেলো। আজ রেফ্রিজারেটর, কোল্ড স্টোরেজ হওয়াতে ফল-মূল তরিতরকারী কাঁচা মাংস রাখবার যে সুবিধা হয়েছে—তার সঙ্গে তুলনীয়। সেদিনও লোকে মাটির ভাণ্ডে তৈল, মধু, জল, শস্ত, শুকনো ফলমূল সংগ্রহ করে রেখেছিল। চাকা কপিকল হওয়াতে বিশজনের টানা-হেঁচড়ানিতে যে কাজ হতো সে-কাজ হলো একটা ছোটো লোকে। চাকা থেকে তকলি, চরকা—তারপর সে যুগে স্পিনিং জেনি প্রভৃতি অসংখ্য কল—আবার এ যুগে আসছে অম্বর চরকা। এইসব আবিষ্কারের মূলে আছে, মানুষের উদ্ভাবনী শক্তি—তার বিজ্ঞানী মেজাজের নিশপিশানী। ইতিহাসের পঠন-পাঠন ব্যাপারে বিজ্ঞানের আবিষ্কার ও শিল্পে তার প্রয়োগ এবং আর্থিক জগতে তার প্রতিক্রিয়া সম্বন্ধে

ওয়াকিবহাল থাকা প্রয়োজন। মানুষের দৈহিক শ্রমকে রিলীফ দেবার জন্ত যন্ত্রের পর সম্মান আবিষ্কৃত ও নির্মিত হচ্ছে। কিন্তু সঙ্গে সঙ্গে বেকার সমস্যাও দেখা দিয়েছে ইতিহাসে—স্পিনিং জেনি লোকে ভেঙে দিয়েছিল। আরও শিল্পক্ষেত্রে rationalization বা automation-এর প্রয়োগে বেকার সমস্যা হচ্ছে। এক একটা বৈজ্ঞানিক আবিষ্কারের ফলে যুগান্তর ঘটে গেছে; যেমন যে বৃত্তি হরণ করেছে—তেমনই নূতন অভাব সৃষ্টি করে নূতন শিল্পের পত্তন করেছে। সামনে ইলেক্ট্রনিক্সের যুগ আসছে—লোকে বলছে সেটা হবে দ্বিতীয় শিল্পবিপ্লব (Second industrial revolution)।

Technic ও Civilization ইতিহাসের অন্তর্ভুক্ত—অঙ্গাঙ্গিভাবে যুক্ত। দুই একটা উদাহরণ দিতে পারা যায় : সিন্থেটিক রঙ আবিষ্কার করলেন গারকিন্স সাহেব ইংলণ্ডে শিল্পীয় প্রয়োগ হলো জার্মানিতে—ভারতের নীলের চাষে টান পড়লো : সেখানকার বাণিজ্যিক ফসল বন্ধ হলো। ভাগ্যে পৃথিবীর নানা দেশে শিল্পের উন্নতি হয়েছিল—তাই চাহিদা হলো পাটের; বাংলা দেশে বেড়ে চললো পাটের চাষ—বন্ধ হলো সরিষা বোনা, ধান রোপা; লোকে টাকা পেলো—চাউল কিনল বর্মা থেকে, তৈল কিনলো উত্তর ভারত থেকে। সরিষা চাষের অভাবে খৈল পায় না গরুতে খৈল পায়না মাঠে। সমস্যার পর সমস্যা সৃষ্টি হয়ে চলছে। পাটের চাষও বিপন্ন হবে একদিন; পাটেরও বিকল্প ফসল অথবা মালপত্র পাঠানো আধার নতুনভাবে তৈরী হচ্ছে; সিমেন্ট তো কাগজের বোড়ায় আসছে, ময়দাও তো কাপড়ের বস্তায় আমদানী হচ্ছে; সুতরাং পাটের একচ্ছত্র আধিপত্যের প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বী দেখা দিয়েছে। কানাডা থেকে গম জাহাজের খোলার মধ্যে তরে য়ুরোপ যাচ্ছে।

রবারের চাষ এককালে গ্রীষ্মমণ্ডলে বুদ্ধি পেয়েছিল অভাবনীয় রূপে—লাখ-পতিরী ক্রোরপতি হয়ে উঠেছিল। কিন্তু আজ সিন্থেটিক রবার তার স্থান দখলের জন্ত জোর প্রতিযোগিতা শুরু করেছে। আসল রেশম শিল্প বিপন্ন—নকল রেশম ও অত্যন্ত বহু-প্রকার নয়নলোভন বিকল্প বস্ত্র বাজারে—এদের সবেই জন্ম হয়েছে বিজ্ঞানীর বিজ্ঞান-শালায়—প্রয়োগশিল্পরূপে দেখা দিয়েছে ধনীদেব ধনকামনা থেকে। গত দুশত বৎসরের মধ্যে মানুষের পোষাক-পরিচ্ছদ, গৃহের সাজসজ্জায় রুচির যে পরিবর্তন হয়েছে তাও ভাববার বিষয়। ছোট একটা উদাহরণ দিই। ফ্রান্সের লোকেদের শখ যেদিন রেশম থেকে স্থতীর কাপড়ের দিকে গেল সেদিন দক্ষিণ ফ্রান্সের সহস্র চাষী, তাঁতি বেকার হয়ে পড়েছিল। ভারতেও খদ্দেরের এত চেষ্টা ব্যর্থ হলো? রুচির, অভ্যাসের পরিবর্তন করা খুবই কঠিন। একবার নূতন সুখকর, প্রীতিপ্রদ জিনিসের স্বাদ পেলে, আর পিছু হাঁটা সম্ভব হয় না।

পিতা থেকে পুত্রের পার্থক্য হচ্ছে—পুত্রের পক্ষে আর পিতার মানসিক, আর্থিক সামাজিক অবস্থায় পিছিয়ে যাওয়া সম্ভব নয়। যুগপরিবর্তন বা কাল বদলের হাওয়ায়

হয় এগিয়ে, নয় পিছিয়ে পড়তে হবে—দাঁড়িয়ে থাকা যাবে না ; সাধারণ ভাবে বলা যেতে পারে পরিবর্তনটাই হচ্ছে। এই পরিবর্তনের তথ্যগুলি জমতে জমতে ইতিহাস রচিত হয়ে চলেছে। কিছুকাল আগের দ্বিতীয় মহাযুদ্ধ ছিল খবরের কাগজের ঐদন্দিন ঘটনা ; কখন যে সেইসব ‘ইতিহাস’ হয়ে জমাট বেঁধে গেল বই-এর পাতায়—তা বলা কঠিন ; মানুষ একবে বুড়ো হলো সেটা যেমন বলা যায় না ; ইতিহাস প্রতিনিয়তই গড়ে চলেছে (becoming)।

এখন প্রশ্ন হচ্ছে কার ইতিহাস পড়তে হবে ? কারা পৃথিবীতে অবিস্মরণীয় ? আমার পরিবারে আমার পিতামাতা অবিস্মরণীয় আমার কাছে—আমার পুত্র-পৌত্রদের কাছে তারা নাম-মাত্র—কিন্তু এঁরা তো আর ইতিহাসে স্মরণীয় নন। গ্রামের ইতিহাসে জেলার ইতিহাসে, প্রদেশের ইতিহাসে—বিশেষ কোনো প্রতিষ্ঠানের ইতিহাসে অনেকে অবিস্মরণীয় হয়তো হতে পারেন, কিন্তু সমগ্র দেশের ইতিহাসে তাঁহাদের স্থান ছরবীণে দেখা নক্ষত্রপুঞ্জের মতো।

আজ ইতিহাসের সমস্যা—বিশেষত্ব ও বিশ্বত্বকেন্দ্রিক ; অর্থাৎ পরিবার বাদ দিয়ে যেমন সমাজ নয়, তেমনিই সমাজ বাদ দিয়ে পরিবার নয়। Individual ও Society, ব্যক্তি ও সমষ্টি অচ্ছেদ্যবন্ধনে যুক্ত ; নিজের দেশ বা স্বদেশও আজ অচ্ছেদ্যভাবে বিশ্ব-ইতিহাসের সঙ্গে জড়িত হয়ে গেছে।

প্রাচীনকালে বা মধ্যযুগে সমগ্র সমাজ-জীবন যখন গ্রাম্য ছিল—বহির্বিষয় তখন তার কাছে ছিল অজ্ঞাত। কিন্তু বহির্বিষয়ের অস্তিত্বের অজ্ঞতার দ্বারা বিষয়ের অবাস্তবতা সূচিত হয় না। তুর্কীরা যে উত্তর ভারত জয় করেছে—সে সংবাদ গঙ্গাভীরে নবদ্বীপ-বাসী ধর্মনিষ্ঠ রাজা জানতেন বলে, তিনি তুর্কীর আকস্মিক আক্রমণ থেকে রেহাই পাননি। বৈজ্ঞানিক বিষয়ে একজনরা আবিষ্কার করতে পারেনি বলে, আর এক জাত যে সে-দিকে আগিয়ে গেছে—তাকে প্রতিহত করতে তো পারা যায়নি। অজ্ঞতা বা প্রাচীনত্বের দোহাই দিয়ে পৃথিবীতে কেউ টিকে থাকতে পারেনি, পারবেও না। আমেরিকার ময়, ইনকা সভ্যতা টিকে থাকতে পারেনি—কারণ তারা পাথুরে যুগের এক কিনারায় পড়ে ছিল—আর ছুনিয়াটা লোহযুগে এগিয়ে গিয়েছিল। প্রকৃতির সম্পদকে কেউ কুড়তে পারেনি বলে, প্রকৃতি মাতা তাঁর দুর্বল আত্মার সন্তানটিকে বাঁচিয়ে রাখতে পারেনি ; যে বিজ্ঞানকে আশ্রয় করতে পারেনি, তাকে দেওয়ালে পিঠ দিতে হয়েছে—এটাই হচ্ছে ইতিহাসের কঠোর সত্য।

আজ ছুনিয়াটা কী ছোট হয়ে এসেছে। মাসেক কালের পথ মানুষ একদিনে পাড়ি দিচ্ছে হাওয়াই জাহাজে। সমস্ত তীর্থ ঘুরে আসতে দুই মাস লাগে। দশম শতকে চীনের টাঙ সম্রাটদের সময়ে পেকিং থেকে তিব্বতের লাসা পৌঁছতে তিন বছর লেগে-ছিল। ১৯৫১ সালে মোটর পথে এক মাস লাগে ; ১৯৫৬ সালে বিমানপথে আট ঘণ্টা

লাগলো। প্রতি দিনের বিশ্ব সংবাদ ঘরে ঘরে ধ্বনিত হচ্ছে। জাহাজে, রেলপথে, মোটরপথে, টেলিগ্রাফের তারের দৃশ্যপথে, রেডিও বা বেতারের অদৃশ্যপথে ছনিয়া বাঁধা পড়েছে। কেউ কাউকে বাদ দিয়ে, অতিক্রম করে, পাশকাটিয়ে কিছু করতে পারছে না। নিউ ইয়র্কের বন্দরে ধর্মঘট হলে বা মেক্সিকোর খনিতে দুর্ঘটনা ঘটলে কলকাতার চাঁদির বাজারে ফটকাবাজি শুরু হয়। স্বয়ং খাল সম্বন্ধে কোন রাষ্ট্র চোখ বুঁজে থাকতে পারছে! The world is one একথা প্রতিদিন স্পষ্ট হচ্ছে। সুতরাং ইতিহাস যারা পড়বেন বা নিজের মনের বিকাশের জন্ত পড়বেন—তাদের পক্ষে বিশ্বদেশকে বাদ দিয়ে শুধু স্বদেশ সম্বন্ধে আলোচনা নিরর্থক হবে।

কার ইতিহাস পড়তে হবে এটাও যেমন প্রশ্ন—ইতিহাস পড়বার উদ্দেশ্য কি সেটাও মনের কাছে স্পষ্ট থাকার দরকার। জাপান নূতন সাম্রাজ্য পত্তন করে তার ইতিহাসকে নতুন করে শেখালে—উগ্র জাতীয়তাবোধ উদ্ভিক্ত করবার জন্ত এই প্রচেষ্টা। ইংরেজ ঘোষণা করলো—Pax Britannica; বললে Rule Britannia rule the waves; ইংরেজের ছেলেকে ঘরে বাইরে শেখালো ব্রিটিশ সাম্রাজ্যে স্বর্যাস্ত হয় না—The sun never sets in the British Empire—এই মেজাজ নিয়ে বড় হয়ে তারা সাম্রাজ্য শাসন ও শোষণ করতে বের হয়ে পড়লো; আত্মবিশ্বাস, আত্মনির্ভর, আত্মত্যাগের শিক্ষা পেলো স্কুলে, যুনিভার্সিটিতে, খেলার মাঠে।

নর্ডিক জাতির শ্রেষ্ঠত্ব প্রতিপন্ন করলেন চেম্বারলেন নামে একব্যক্তি—আসলে ইংরেজ কিন্তু বিয়ে করে হল জার্মান; তাঁর প্রতিপাত্ত বিষয় হয়েছিল নর্ডিক জাতের লোকেরা প্রায় প্রাচীনকালের chosen people-এর মতন; এই নর্ডিক শ্রেষ্ঠতা-তত্ত্বের চরম বিকৃত রূপ হলো হিটলারী আর্থামি। পৃথিবীর ইতিহাসে দুঃস্বপ্নের রাত নেমে এলো এই জাত্যাভিমান থেকে। আমরাও আর্থ বলে গর্ব করতে শিখেছি পাশ্চাত্য পণ্ডিতদের অলীক আর্থ জাতিতত্ত্ব থেকে। খেতকায় লোকে শিখেছে নিগ্রো, জুলু, বান্টুরা কৃষকায়—অতএব ছোট জাত; তাদের সঙ্গে গা ঘঁসাঘঁসি করে গাড়িতে যাওয়া যায় না। এক স্কুল কলেজে অধ্যয়ন করা যায় না। এক হোটেলের চুকে খাওয়া যায় না! এই শিক্ষা পাচ্ছে ঘরে ঘরে বাপমায়ের কাছ থেকে; স্কুল মাস্টারের কাছ থেকে তৈরী হচ্ছে নয়া কুরুস ক্রান, টেডি বয়জ। নানা মতবাদ দিয়ে ছনিয়াটাকে নানা জাতে বিভক্ত করা হয়েছে; আজ ধর্মের নামে মানুষের মধ্যে কী পর্বত প্রমাণ দুর্লভ্য বাধা সৃষ্টি হয়েছে। মুসলমানের ছোঁয়া খেলে জাত যায়, নমাজের পর কাফেরের মুখ দেখলে নৈতিক মতবাদের নাম করে রাজনৈতিক অভীষ্টসিদ্ধির জন্ত ভেদের প্রাচীর কম উঁচু হয়নি।

যুদ্ধ করা অর্থাৎ নরহত্যা করাটা যে ধর্ম—একথা তো যুগে যুগে লোকে বলে আসছেন—নানা অছিলায়। ক্ষত্রিয়ের ধর্ম-যুদ্ধ—আত্মীয় বধ করা যেতে পারে নিকাম তাবে—

গীতায় শ্রীকৃষ্ণ তো সেই উপদেশ দিয়েছিলেন মুহাম্মান অজু'নকে চাঙ্গা করবার জন্ত। ইসলাম যুদ্ধ চালিয়ে জগতের অধেকটা জয় করেছিল—কোনো দিন হত্যা পাপ বলে ভাঁওতা দেয় নি। খ্রীষ্টের একগালে চড় খেয়ে আর এক গাল বাড়িয়ে দেবার উপদেশটা খ্রীষ্টীয় জগতে কীভাবে প্রতিপালিত হয়ে এসেছে সে কথা যে সামান্য ইতিহাস জানে, তার কাছে অবিস্মৃত নয়। যুদ্ধের Philosophy লেখা হয়েছে ; কিন্তু লোকে একথাও বলেছে যে, এটা অত্যন্ত expensive game the high cost of killing-এর জন্ত সাধারণকে বহুকাল ট্যাক্স জোগাতে হয়।

ইতিহাসে দেখা গিয়েছে যে শক্তিমানরা চিরকাল একীকরণের দিকে সমস্ত শক্তি নিয়োগ করেছেন ; ঐক্য (unity) সৃষ্টি থেকে, একাকার (uniformity) করবার দিকে দৃষ্টি দিয়েছেন বেশি করে। আধুনিক যুগে ইসলাম এই একীকরণের চেষ্টা করেছে এক ধর্মগ্রন্থ, এক ভাষা, এক আচার, এক কানুন, একপ্রকার বেশভূষা, এক ধরনের নাম, এক সময়ে নমাজ, রোজা, ঈদ, হজ্জ্। সবই খুব ভালো করে regimented ; কিন্তু তাই বলে কি ইসলামিক জগতে সংগ্রাম ও সংঘাত কিছু কম ছিল ? তার অবসান কি এখনো হয়েছে ? হয়নি যে তার কারণ আছে ; ঐক্যসৃষ্টির মূলে আছে মানসিক পরিবর্তন, আর একীকরণ হচ্ছে বাহ্যিক আবরণ ও অনুষ্ঠান। একীকরণের প্রধান বাধা জাতিগত বা ত্রাশনাল আর্থিক ও সাংস্কৃতিক স্বার্থ। ধর্মের নামে বা বিশেষ ideology-র নামে মানুষকে একাকার করা যায়—হয়তো কিছু দূর পর্যন্ত উদ্দেশ্যমূলক কার্যকলাপও সফল হয় ; কিন্তু দেখা যায় জলের থেকে রক্ত গাঢ়, মানুষের সংস্কৃতি ও অর্থনৈতিক স্বার্থ বিপর্যস্ত হলে সে বৈকে দাঁড়ায়—ধর্মের দোহাই, aid ideology-র দোহাই—কিছুই আর তাদের একছত্রতলে এঁটে রাখতে পারে না। পৃথিবীর ইতিহাসে ছলে বলে কলে কৌশলে একাকার করবার চেষ্টার উদাহরণ ভুরি ভুরি, পারসিক সাম্রাজ্য আরব সাম্রাজ্য, তুর্কী সাম্রাজ্য, অস্ট্রিয়ান সাম্রাজ্য, ব্রিটিশ ও জাপানী সাম্রাজ্য—কেউ টিকতে পারলো না।

রাজনৈতিক সাম্রাজ্য অপেক্ষা বিংশ শতকে অর্থনৈতিক সাম্রাজ্য স্থাপনের এক নবতর চেষ্টা দেখা দিয়েছে ; মার্কিন যুক্তরাষ্ট্র আজ মধ্য ও দক্ষিণ আমেরিকায় এই অদৃশ্য সাম্রাজ্য বিস্তার করেছেন। দ্বিতীয় মহাযুদ্ধের পর সারা দুনিয়ার রাজ্যে রাজ্যে নানা নামে অর্থ সাহায্য (aid) করে, তাদের নতুন শৃঙ্খলে বাঁধবার চেষ্টা চলছে। তারা জানাতে চায় পৃথিবীটা কা'র বশ ! আর যারা তাদের সোনার শিকল পরতে নারাজ, তারা আন্তর্জাতিক, অর্থনৈতিক ধনভাণ্ডার থেকে টাকা ধার পায় না ; তারা মনে করে মিশরের অসুস্থান বাঁধের কাজ অচল হবে, ভারতের দ্বিতীয় পঞ্চবার্ষিকী পরিকল্পনা কল্পনাতেই থেকে যাবে। উত্তম ও অধমদের মধ্যে ঋণ-লেন-দেন নিয়ে চলছে রাজনীতির চাপ !

আর এক শ্রেণীর অদৃশ্য সাম্রাজ্যের বিস্তার লাভ করছে ; সেটি আপাত-দৃষ্টিতে বিশেষ ideology বা মতবাদের উপর প্রতিষ্ঠিত। তার প্রচার পদ্ধতি অতি বিচিত্র। অতি সরল কথা—দর্শন ও অর্থনীতিতত্ত্বের বাক্যরসে জ্বাল দিয়ে একটা জটিল তত্ত্ব সৃষ্টি হয়ে উঠেছে যে, যা' দেখে ও শুনে সাধারণ লোকের তাক্ লেগে যায়। সকলেরই ধারণা জন্মেছে স্লোগান দিয়ে সম্ভব হতে পারলেই 'সব পেয়েছির দেশে' গিয়ে পৌঁছবে। কিন্তু কালপ্রবাহ দেখা যাচ্ছে 'সব পেয়েছির দেশে'র সঙ্গে 'তাদের দেশে'র তফাৎ খুব সামান্যই ; কেবল তফাতের মধ্যে নয় 'তাদের দেশে সবাই' শান্তির ডুগডুগি বাজিয়ে আস্তিন গুটিয়ে প্রতীক্ষা করছেন ও প্রতিবেশীদের উত্তাক্ত ও বিদেশে ঘরে ঘরে অশান্তির বিষ-বীজ সরবরাহ করছেন অতি উত্তম কাগজের চৌঙায় করে। আইডিয়াকে অহুসরণ করা এক জিনিস আর আইডিয়ার বাহকদের তা'বেদারি করা আর এক বস্তু। প্রমথনাথকে যায়, প্রমথদেবকে নয়। টিটো, গোমুলকা, নাজ,—এঁরা সকলেই মার্কস-বাদী কম্যুনিষ্ট—কিন্তু স্নাত-রুশ মার্ক 'সমাজতন্ত্রের ভাগচাষী হয়ে থাকতে নারাজ। কম্যুনিজমকে কোনো বুদ্ধিমান ও সং ব্যক্তি অস্বীকার করে না—সোবিয়ত কম্যুনিষ্টদের তা'বেদারিতেই আপত্তি।

অনুরূপ ঘটনা ঘটেছিল মধ্যযুগে, ইসলামের ধর্ম-তথা-রাজ্যগুরু খলিফার নামে খুতবা পড়েও আরবদের তা'বে থাকেনি ইসলাম-জগতের অসংখ্য বাদশাহ, মামলকের দল। বোগদাদের পারসী-আরবী খিলাফতের স্বার্থ গজনি, ঘোরের তুর্কী সর্দারদের স্বার্থ এক নয় ; ইসলামের নামে তুর্কী-পাঠান-মুঘলরা প্রীতির আতিশয্যে পরস্পরের কণ্ঠলগ্ন হয়নি ; আজও ইসলামের নামে জিঞ্জীর উঠছে, কিন্তু ইসলামিক জগৎ বেহেস্তে পরিণত হয়নি। আসলে “যেখানে যথার্থ পার্থক্য আছে, সেখানে সেই পার্থক্যকে যথাযোগ্য স্থানে বিভক্ত করিয়া, সংযত করিয়া, তবে তাহাকে ঐক্যদান করা সম্ভব” এটা বলেছিলেন রবীন্দ্রনাথ ১৯০২ অব্দে। তিনি বলেন, “সকলেই এক হইল বলিয়া আইন করিলেই এক হয় না। যাহারা এক হইবার নহে তাহাদের মধ্যে সম্বন্ধ স্থাপনের উপায় তাহাদিগকে পৃথক অধিকারের মধ্যে বিভক্ত করিয়া দেওয়া। পৃথককে বলপূর্বক এক করিলে তাহারা একদিন বলপূর্বক বিচ্ছিন্ন হইয়া যায়, সেই বিচ্ছেদের সময় প্রলয় ঘটে।” পূর্বেই উদাহরণ-গুলি দিয়েছি।

ভারতের ইতিহাসের একটা বৈশিষ্ট্য আছে বলে মনে হয় ; এদেশের পোলিটিক্যাল হিস্ট্রি লেখা হয়নি—একমাত্র কল্লনের রাজতরঙ্গিনী ছাড়া উল্লেখযোগ্য ইতিহাস গ্রন্থ নেই। পুরাণ, শিলালেখ বা মুদ্রার উপর রাজাদের যে নাম পাওয়া যায়—সেই নামের কঙ্কালের উপর কল্পনার পোষাক চাপিয়ে তাঁদের স্মহান করে তুলেছি। অতি সামান্য তথ্য যা পাওয়া যায়, তার উপর অনেক 'বোধহয়' 'সম্ভবত' প্রভৃতি শব্দ দিয়ে গবেষণাকে বৈজ্ঞানিকতার রূপ দেন ও একটা মতবাদ খাড়া করেন ; কিন্তু দেখা যায় দুই পণ্ডিতের

মতের মধ্যে আসমান-জমিন ফারাক। কিছুকাল পরে 'বোধ হয়' 'সম্ভবত' শব্দগুলি ঝরে পড়ে পাঠ্যপুস্তকে দেখা দেয় ঐতিহাসিক তথ্যরূপে।

প্রাচীন ভারতে পুরাণকারগণ যে ইতিহাস লিখে যান নি—সেটা বুদ্ধির বা সত্যের প্রতি নিষ্ঠার অভাবে—তা ভাববার কোনো ক্রাণ নেই। তাল রাজা ছিলেন, কিন্তু অধিকাংশই ছিলেন মন্দ, তার নমুনা ভারতের সাতশ' দেশীয় রাজাদের মধ্যে খুঁজলেই পাওয়া যায়। সেইসব রাজাদের কুকীর্তির বোঝা কে বহন করতো? সেইসব ইতিহাস পড়ে মন ক্ষুব্ধ হয়—কোন বৃহৎ ভাবনা মনে আসে না, অথচ যারা মহৎচরিত্র, তাঁরা তো ভারতের সাহিত্যে, উপাখ্যানে অমর স্থান লাভ করেছেন।

আজ হিন্দু-মুসলমানের মধ্যে সম্ভাব স্থায়ী করবার চেষ্টা চলছে; অথচ হিন্দুর ছেলে স্কুলে ছোটবেলা থেকেই পড়ছে মুসলমান বাদশাহ-স্ববাদাররা, নগরের কাজি কোতায়ালরা কিভাবে হিন্দুর প্রতি অত্যাচার করেছিল—তার ফিরিস্তিও লম্বা। আবার বাংলা দেশের মুসলমান ভাবে সিন্ধু দেশ তারা জয় করেছিল; কলকাতায় তা নিয়ে উৎসবও হতো! ইতিহাস কিছুতেই ভুলতে দেয় না যে কে কি অত্যাচার করেছিল! আমি একথা বলছি যে ইতিহাস থেকে তথ্য নির্বাসিত করতে হবে; তথ্যপূর্ণ ইতিহাস আলোচনার বয়স আছে—স্বকুমার মতি শিশু ও বালকদের মনে এই ধর্মদ্বেষ দেগে দিলে ফল ভালো হবে না। অথচ ইতিবাচক দিক থেকে ভারত-ইতিহাসের অনেক কিছু আছে, যার প্রতি আরও দৃষ্টি দিতে পারা যেতে পারতো। ভারতীয় ও আরবী-পারসি-তুর্কীর ইসলামিক সভ্যতা ও সংস্কৃতির মিলনে যে নয়া ভারত সৃষ্টি হয়েছিল এবং এখন পর্যন্ত বা জীবন্ত তার কথা কতটুকু ছাত্রদের মনে বসে? ভারতীয় ইসলামের মধ্যে দেখা দিল সূফী মতবাদ, হিন্দুদের মধ্যেও আবির্ভূত হলো সম্ভবতের দল। দেশীয় ভাষাগুলি নতুন প্রাণ পেলো—মুসলমানদের আবির্ভাবের পর থেকেই দেশীয় ভাষার কাকলী শোনা গেল।

আধুনিক যুগে এসে দেখি বাংলার ইতিহাস বা বাঙালীর ইতিহাস বলে কোনো বিষয় নেই পাঠ্য; ছাত্রদের উপযোগী বাংলার ইতিহাসও খুঁজে পাওয়া যায় না; এটা দুঃখের বিষয় নয়—লজ্জার বিষয়। বিশ্বত্ব বিশেষত্বকে বাদ দিয়ে নয়, তেমনি বঙ্গত্ব বাদ দিয়ে ভারতত্ব হওয়া উচিত নয়। পরিবারের পোষণ দরকার—সমাজ সেবাও দরকার। ভারতের অনেক অকিঞ্চিৎকর ঘটনা ছাত্ররা জানে—অথচ বাংলা দেশের দুইটা বড় বিদ্রোহের খবর তাদের পাঠ্য বইতে নেই—নীলকরদের বিরুদ্ধে অসহযোগ আন্দোলন ও ধনপতিদের বিরুদ্ধে সাঁওতাল-বিদ্রোহ। ইংরেজ আমলে অর্থনৈতিক সমস্যাকে কেন্দ্র করে এই দুই বিপ্লবেরই উদ্ভব হয়। আরও কাছে এসে দেখি—এত বড় জাতীয় আন্দোলন—যার ফলে ভারত স্বাধীনতা পেলো—তার কথা কতটুকু স্থান পেয়েছে ইতিহাসে; অথচ এইসব ছেলেরাই ভাবীকালের সমাজ গড়ার কাজে লাগবে। জানবে না তারা স্বাধীনতার ইতিহাস?

মানব ইতিহাসের প্রতিধাপে বিজ্ঞানের নূতন নূতন তত্ত্ব ও তথ্য তাকে নূতন প্রাণ-দিচ্ছে ; বিজ্ঞানের আবিষ্কার ও তার প্রয়োগের সঙ্গে অর্থনৈতিক জীবন যে অঙ্গাঙ্গিভাবে জড়িত, তার আভাস আমরা পূর্বেই দিয়েছি। রেল, ষ্টিমার, ডাক, তার, রেডিও, খবরের কাগজ, মুদ্রাযন্ত্র প্রভৃতি আধুনিক বিজ্ঞানী উপাদান যুগান্তর এনেছে সমাজের আর্থিক কাঠামোর মধ্যে। সুতরাং অর্থনৈতিক সাধারণ ইতিহাসের সঙ্গে জড়িয়ে আছে—বিজ্ঞানের প্রয়োগে শিল্পের প্রবর্তন কাহিনীর সঙ্গে জড়িয়ে আছে অর্থনীতি, এগুলি ইতিহাসেরই অঙ্গ হওয়া উচিত।

অতি বিস্তারিত অসম্বন্ধ সমাজদেহ থেকে যখন মুষ্টিমেয় লোক ধনপোষণ করে স্ফীত হয়ে ওঠে, তখনই সে-সব রক্ষার জন্ত গভর্নমেন্ট সৃষ্টির, পুলিশ বা সৈন্যবাহিনী রক্ষা করা দরকার হয়ে পড়ে ; আদিম জাতির মধ্যে পুলিশ পাহারার ব্যবস্থা নেই—আত্ম-রক্ষা নিজেরাই করে। ধন রক্ষার প্রসঙ্গ থেকে শাসন প্রণালীর উদ্ভব ; মানব ইতিহাস বা দেশের ইতিহাস পড়তে গেলে এটা জানা ও বোঝা বিশেষ দরকার ; কারণ, বর্তমান যুগ হচ্ছে রাজনীতির যুগ ; ছাত্ররা অন্ধভাবে সমাজে যেন প্রবেশ না করে।

অতীতের ইতিহাসে সাধারণ মানুষ দেখা যায় না ; দেখা যায় বড় মানুষ ; সে বড় মানুষরা যোদ্ধা, নরঘাতক। সাধারণ মানুষের জন্ম হয়েছে আধুনিক কলীয় যুগে industrial revolution প্রভৃতি নানা ঘটনার ঘাত-প্রীতঘাতে এই সাধারণ মানুষ বা শ্রমিকের আবির্ভাব হলো। আজ এই জাগ্রত নর, নারায়ণের সম্মান চাইবে। Human rights বলে একটা শব্দ চালু হয়েছে—তাই তার দাবী হয়েছে—সে তার যথাযোগ্য মূল্য চায়, শ্রমের মর্যাদা চায় তার কাজের। ভাবী যুগের নাগরিকরা আজ আমাদের স্কুল কলেজের ছাত্র, তাদের তৈরী করতে হবে পূর্ণ দায়িত্ব গ্রহণের ; এ বিষয়ে unesco কি কাজ করছে তার খবর অনেকেই রাখেন ; কারণ এই নভেম্বর মাসে unesco দশ বৎসর পূর্ণ হলো এবং দিল্লীতে তার সম্মেলন হয়ে গেল। রেডিও মারফত এই প্রতিষ্ঠান সম্বন্ধে অনেক তথ্য প্রচার করা হয়েছে। তাঁরা মানুষের জন্মগত, রেস বা জাতিগত অহংকারকে শাণিত করবার জন্ত শিক্ষা-পদ্ধতিতে নূতন ধারা প্রবর্তনের সুপারিশ করছেন। নূতন যুগের মানুষের মধ্যে জাগবে আত্মবোধ, জাগবে তার বিশ্ববোধ।

রবীন্দ্রনাথের শিক্ষাদর্শনের মূল কথা এইটি ; চাই আত্মবোধ, যার থেকে বিশ্বকে আপন আত্মার মধ্যে জানতে পারি ; চাই বিশ্ববোধ, যাতে করে আত্মাকে প্রসারিত করতে পারি বিশ্ব মধ্যে। তাঁর বিশ্বভারতীর বিদ্যায়তনে ভারত ও বিশ্ব এক হয়েছে—সারা ছুনিয়া একটা নীড়ের মতো হয়ে ভারতের এই মহামানবের সাগরতীরে আশ্রয় পেয়েছে। আজ ভূগোলের গণ্ডিরেখা যেমন মানুষের দেহকে ক্ষুদ্র দেশের মধ্যে আটকে রাখতে পারছে না, তার মনকে অতিজাতীয়তার গোম্পদ থেকে বের হয়ে আসতে হবে।

নয়াছনিয়ার নাগরিক হতে যেমন চাই বিশেষত্ব, তেমনই চাই বিশ্বত্ব। আমার মূল বক্তব্য হচ্ছে ইতিহাসকে ভূগোল, নৃতত্ত্ব, ভাষাতত্ত্ব, বিজ্ঞান ও শিল্পাদি চর্চার অন্তর্ভুক্ত করে দেখতে হবে। বিজ্ঞানে আবিষ্কার ও তার প্রয়োগ ইতিহাসের পাতায় পাতায় যুগান্তর এনে এনে আগিয়ে চলছে। ইতিহাসের সঙ্গে ধর্মনীতি, অর্থনীতি, রাজনীতি অচ্ছেদ্য-ভাবে যুক্ত স্তত্রাং ছাত্রকে ওয়াকিবহাল করতে হবে এই বিচিত্র প্রভাবের অতিষাতে মানুষ কিভাবে আগিয়ে চলছে। পৃথিবীর নামহীন যে শ্রমিকদল আমাদের নিত্য নৈমিত্তিক সামগ্রী সরবরাহ করছে—তাদের সম্মানিত কথা আমরা ভুলে থাকি। সেই নামহীন মানুষই হচ্ছে ভাবীকালের মহামানব; এদের স্মরণ করেই রবীন্দ্রনাথ লিখে-ছিলেন ঐ ‘মহামানব আসে।’

তত্ত্ব-শাস্ত্রের তত্ত্ব বা পদার্থ নিরূপণ

শ্রীমুখময় ভট্টাচার্য্য

তত্ত্বশাস্ত্রকে আগম, নিগম এবং মন্ত্র-শাস্ত্র নামেও অভিহিত করা হইয়াছে। বিশেষ আলোচনা না করিয়া অনেক পণ্ডিতব্যক্তিও তত্ত্বের নাম শুনিলেই একরূপ অশ্রদ্ধা প্রকাশ করেন। পক্ষান্তরে অনেকে আবার তত্ত্বের দার্শনিকতা সম্বন্ধে কিছু বাড়াবাড়িও করিয়া থাকেন। তাঁহারা অদ্বৈত বেদান্তের নিকষে পরীক্ষা করিয়া তত্ত্বের মতবাদের কতটুকু গ্রহণযোগ্য, তাহা স্থির করেন। উল্লিখিত উভয় গবেষকগোষ্ঠীর কাহারও মতবাদের উপর আস্থা স্থাপন করা যায় না।

শুধু মূল তত্ত্বগ্রন্থ এবং শ্রদ্ধাবান্ আচার্য্যগণের নিবন্ধগ্রন্থ হইতেই বর্তমান প্রবন্ধ সংকলিত হইতেছে। আচার্য্যগণের মধ্যে শঙ্কর, (প্রপঞ্চসার) অভিনবগুপ্ত এবং ভাস্কররায়ের তাত্ত্বিক ব্যাখ্যাশৈলীকে প্রধানতঃ অনুসরণ করা হইবে।

তত্ত্বশাস্ত্র লৌকিক-বুদ্ধিগম্য বিচারশাস্ত্র নহে। যোগশাস্ত্রের স্থায় এইশাস্ত্রেও অনুষ্ঠানেরই প্রাধান্য। সুতরাং এই বিষয়ে কোনরূপ গবেষণা চলিতে পারে না। প্রভু-সম্মিত শাস্ত্রের আদেশ পালন করিলেই ঈশ্বরিয়া ফল লাভ হয়—ইহাই ভারতীয় আচার্য্যগণের উপদেশ।

তত্ত্বের দুইটি অংশ আছে। একটি হইতেছে কৰ্ম্মকাণ্ড বা উপাসনাকাণ্ড এবং অপরটি জ্ঞানকাণ্ড বা তত্ত্বকাণ্ড। দুইটিই পরস্পর মিলিতভাবে রহিয়াছে। একটিকে বাদ দিয়া অপরটিকে লক্ষ্য করা যায় না।

ব্রহ্ম বা পরমশিবই মানবের চরম উপেয়। ব্রহ্মজ্ঞানের ছয়টি মিলিত উপায় তত্ত্ব উপদিষ্ট হইয়াছে। এই ছয়টি উপায়ের পারিভাষিক সংজ্ঞা—‘ষড়ধ্বা’। বর্ণ, পদ, কলা, তত্ত্ব, মন্ত্র ও ভুবন এই ছয়টিকে অধ্বা বা ব্রহ্মজ্ঞানের পথ বলা হয়। বর্ণশব্দে অকারাদি—ক্ষকারান্ত বর্ণমালাকে বুঝায়। নিবৃত্ত্যাদি পাঁচটি অবস্থাকে ‘কলা’ বলে। শিবাদি ক্ষিত্যন্ত ছত্রিশটি পদার্থকে ‘তত্ত্ব’ বলে। (সাংখ্যদর্শনে এবং শ্রীমদ্ভগবদ্গীতার বাৎসন্যন-তায়েও পদার্থবাচক তত্ত্বশব্দের প্রয়োগ দেখা যায়।) সাধকের নিজের ইষ্টমন্ত্রকেই ‘মন্ত্র’ বলা হইয়াছে। ভুবনশব্দ চতুর্দশ ভুবনের বাচক।

উল্লিখিত ছয়টি অধ্বার মধ্যে তত্ত্বনামক অধ্বা সম্বন্ধে তত্ত্ব যে সিদ্ধান্ত পাওয়া যায়, তাহাই আমাদের সংকলনের বিষয়। তত্ত্বের সংখ্যা—ছত্রিশ। এই ছত্রিশটি তত্ত্বকে অবলম্বন করিয়া তত্ত্বশাস্ত্রে যে বিচার করা হইয়াছে, তাহাই তত্ত্বের দার্শনিক বা তর্কগদ্যী আলোচনা।

‘তন্’-ধাতুর উত্তর কর্তৃবাচ্যে ‘কিপ্’-প্রত্যয় যোগ করিলে ‘তৎ’ এই পদ সিদ্ধ হয়। ‘তন্’-ধাতুর অর্থ বিস্তার বা ব্যাপ্তি। যিনি সর্বত্র সর্বকালে বিস্তৃত বা পরিব্যাপ্ত, তিনিই ‘তৎ’। ‘তৎ’-শব্দ ব্রহ্মের বাচক। ঐ, তৎ, সৎ—এই তিনটিই ব্রহ্মবাচক শব্দ।

‘তৎ’-এর ভাব বা ধর্মকে ‘তত্ত্ব’ বলা হয়। শিব হইতে পৃথিবী পর্যন্ত ছত্রিশটি পদার্থ ‘তৎ’-এর অসাধারণ ধর্ম বা ভাব।

ত্য়াদি দর্শনের ‘পদার্থ’ এবং আগমসম্মত ‘তত্ত্ব’ এক হইলেও বিচারে দৃষ্টিভঙ্গীর পার্থক্য আছে। পরম-শিবের ধর্মরূপেই তাত্ত্বিকগণ সকল বস্তুকে দেখিয়া থাকেন। সাধন-বিভাগ শুধু যুক্তিবহুল দার্শনিক পদার্থনিরূপণ তাঁহাদের অভিপ্রেত নহে।

ছত্রিশটি তত্ত্বের বাহিরে কোন বস্তুই বিশ্বে থাকিতে পারে না। ‘ষট্‌ত্রিংশত্ত্বানি বিশ্বম্’। তত্ত্বগুলির সংজ্ঞা—১. শিব, ২. শক্তি, ৩. সদাশিব, ৪. ঈশ্বর, ৫. বিদ্যা, ৬. মায়ী, ৭. অবিদ্যা, ৮. কলা, ৯. রাগ, ১০. কাল, ১১. নিয়তি, ১২. জীব, ১৩. প্রকৃতি, ১৪. মনঃ, ১৫. বুদ্ধি, ১৬. অহঙ্কার, ১৭. শ্রোত্র, ১৮. ত্বক্, ১৯. চক্ষুঃ, ২০. জিহ্বা, ২১. ঘ্রাণ, ২২. বাক্, ২৩. পাণি, ২৪. পাদ, ২৫. পায়ু, ২৬. উপস্থ, ২৭. শব্দ, ২৮. স্পর্শ, ২৯. রূপ, ৩০. রস, ৩১. গন্ধ, ৩২. আকাশ, ৩৩. বায়ু, ৩৪. তেজঃ, ৩৫. জল, ৩৬. পৃথিবী।

(১) আগমকীর্তিত শিব এবং উপনিষৎপ্রতিপাদিত ব্রহ্ম একই তত্ত্ব। শিব যখন এক হইতে বহুরূপ-ধারণ করিয়া লীলা করিতে ইচ্ছা করেন, তখনই সৃষ্টি আরম্ভ হয়। ইচ্ছাশক্তিরূপ-উপাধিবিশিষ্ট শিবই ‘শিবতত্ত্ব’।

শিব নিগুণ হইলেও ইচ্ছার উদয়ে সগুণ হইয়া থাকেন। তত্ত্বশাস্ত্রে শিব এবং পরম-শিব—এই উভয় শব্দই সগুণ এবং নিগুণ ব্রহ্ম অর্থে প্রযুক্ত হইয়াছে। কোন কোন নিবন্ধগ্রন্থে সগুণ ব্রহ্ম অর্থে ‘শিব’ এবং নিগুণ ব্রহ্ম অর্থে ‘পরম-শিব’ শব্দের প্রয়োগ পাওয়া যায়।

প্রলয়কালে সূক্ষ্মরূপ জগৎকে আপনার কুক্ষিগত করিয়া শক্তি শিবে লয় প্রাপ্ত হন। সেই সময় শক্তি নিষ্ক্রিয় থাকেন বলিয়া তদবস্থাপন্ন নিগুণ ব্রহ্মই পরম-শিব।

তত্ত্বমতে সকল বস্তুই চেতন, কিছুই জড় নহে। সকল বস্তুই প্রকাশস্বরূপ। বস্তুর প্রকাশরূপতাকে বাদ দিলে ভ্রাহ্মার কোন অস্তিত্বই থাকে না। অতএব তত্ত্বদৃষ্টিতে সকল বস্তুই প্রকাশময় শিবস্বরূপ। শুধু যে জেয় ভাব-পদার্থই শিবস্বরূপ, তাহা নহে, অভাব-পদার্থও শিব-স্বরূপ। বস্তুর প্রকাশ ও প্রকাশক প্রমাতা অভিন্ন তত্ত্ব।

প্রকাশময় শিব স্বতন্ত্র এবং সন্ধিৎ-স্বরূপ বলিয়া প্রত্যক্ষাদি প্রমাণ তাঁহার স্বরূপকে পরিচ্ছিন্ন করিতে পারে না। প্রমেয় বস্তুগুলিও প্রকাশময়কে পরিচ্ছিন্ন করিতে অসমর্থ। স্বতন্ত্র অর্থাৎ অন্তরীকৃত প্রকাশস্বরূপ দেশ, কাল প্রভৃতির দ্বারা সীমাবদ্ধ নহেন। যেহেতু তিনি সর্বব্যাপক এবং নিত্য, সেইহেতু দেশ এবং কল্পিত বর্তমানাদি কালত্রয়ের দ্বারা অনির্দেশ্য।

অভিনবগুপ্ত বলিয়াছেন, ছয়ভাবে শিবের স্বরূপ উপলব্ধ হয়। ভোগের আধার ভুবনরূপে, জগতের সকল বস্তুর দেহরূপে, জ্যোতীরূপে, আকাশাদিভূতরূপে, নাদস্বরূপ শব্দরূপে এবং মন্ত্রাস্বক শব্দরূপে।

সৰ্বাস্বক প্রকাশময় শিবকে যে-সাধক যেভাবে ভাবনা করেন, তিনি সেইভাবেই তাঁহার স্বরূপ জানিতে পারেন। উল্লেখিত ছয়টি পরস্পর বিভিন্ন উপাধি বা বিশেষণের যোগে ইহাও বোঝা যাইতেছে যে, সঙ্কোচক এই ভুবনাদির প্রলয় ঘটলেও শিব একই ভাবে বিরাজ করিবেন। যেহেতু তিনি বিশ্বময় হইয়াও বিশ্বোত্তীর্ণ।

কামিক-তন্ত্রের প্রমাণ হইতে জানা যায়, শিব সৰ্বাকৃতি, অর্থাৎ বিশ্বরূপ হইয়াও নিরাকৃতি ও বিশ্বোত্তীর্ণ।

জল বা আয়নাতে প্রতিবিম্বিত বস্তু জল বা আয়না হইতে পৃথক্ হইলেও প্রতিবিম্বন-কালে সেই বস্তুকে জলাদি হইতে অভিন্ন বলিয়াই প্রতীতি জন্মে। প্রকাশময় শিব তাঁহার শক্তিরূপ নিখিল বিশ্বকে আপন স্বরূপ হইতে অভিন্নরূপে কুক্ষিস্থ করিয়া প্রকাশ করিতেছেন। এই কারণেই তিনি বিশ্বময় হইয়াও বিশ্বোত্তীর্ণ এবং বিশ্বোত্তীর্ণ হইয়াও বিশ্বময়।

নিখিল বিশ্ব যে তাঁহারই শক্তি, এই কথা তন্ত্র ব্যতীত পুরাণাদিতেও পাওয়া যায়।

বিহু, নিত্য, বিশ্বাকৃতি, বিশ্বোত্তীর্ণ প্রভৃতি উপাধির দ্বারা শিবকে বিশেষিত করিলেও তাঁহার প্রকৃত স্বরূপের কিছুমাত্র হানি ঘটে না। আপাতদৃষ্টিতে এই ধর্মগুণি বিভিন্ন হইলেও শিবের একমাত্র ধর্ম প্রকাশময়ত্বে এইগুলি অন্তর্ভুক্ত হইতে পারে। প্রকাশময়ত্বের পারিভাষিক সংজ্ঞা হইতেছে—‘অহংপ্রত্যবমর্শ’। ইহারই অপর সংজ্ঞা সংবিৎ বা স্বাতন্ত্র্যশক্তি। এই শক্তির যোগে শিব সগুণরূপে স্রষ্টি, স্থিতি ও প্রলয়ের কারণ হইয়া থাকেন।

অষ্টা শিব তাঁহার নৈসর্গিকী ক্ষুরন্তা বা বিমর্শ-শক্তির সহিত যুক্ত হইয়া আপনাকেই বিশ্বরূপে প্রকাশ করেন।

সংবিৎ, বিমর্শ বা স্বাতন্ত্র্য-শক্তিই ইচ্ছা, জ্ঞান, ক্রিয়া প্রভৃতি নানা সংজ্ঞায় কীৰ্ত্তিত হইয়াছে। স্বাতন্ত্র্যশক্তিমত্তা আর অনন্তশক্তিমত্তা একই কথা। বস্তুর আপন সত্তা বা রূপই তাহার শক্তি। শক্তি ও শক্তিমান্ বস্তুতঃ অভিন্ন তত্ত্ব। উভয়ের ভেদ-প্রতীতি দ্রাব্তিবিশেষ। ব্যবহারিক দশাতে উভয়ের ভেদ শুধু আরোপিত হইয়া থাকে।

স্বর্য্য তেজঃপদার্থ। কিন্তু সাধারণতঃ আমরা বলিয়া থাকি, ‘স্বর্য্য তেজস্বী, ‘স্বর্য্যের তেজ’—ইত্যাদি। এইভাবেই শিব স্বয়ং শক্তিস্বরূপ হইলেও ‘শিব শক্তিমান্’—এইরূপ ব্যবহারিক প্রয়োগ করা হয়। উভয় তত্ত্বই অভিন্ন অর্থাৎ একই পদার্থ।

শক্তি ও শক্তিমানের মধ্যে যথার্থ ভেদ না থাকিলেও বিভিন্ন শক্তির মধ্যে পরস্পর ভেদ থাকা তো সম্ভবপর—এইপ্রকার পূর্বপক্ষের উত্তরে বলা হইয়াছে—অগ্নিতে

দাহিকাশক্তির মত পাচিকা-শক্তিও বিद्यমান। পরন্তু এই দুইটি শক্তিকে পৃথকভাবে বিচার করা চলে না। শক্তিবিশিষ্ট অগ্নির শক্তিরূপে একই তেজঃপদার্থের উপলব্ধি হয়। সেইরূপ শিবস্থিত অনন্ত শক্তিও বাস্তবিক বিভিন্ন নহে। শক্তি ও শক্তিমানের ভেদপ্রতীতি যেরূপ অবাস্তব, শক্তিসমূহের পরস্পর ভেদও সেইরূপ অবাস্তব কাল্পনিক-মাত্র।

শিবতত্ত্ব বিষয়ে আপাততঃ এই পর্য্যন্ত আলোচনার পর শক্তিতত্ত্বের আলোচনা করা বাইতেছে।

২. শক্তিতত্ত্ব—শিবের সংবিৎ বা স্বাতন্ত্র্যকে ‘শক্তি’ বলা হয়। সৃষ্টি প্রভৃতি বিষয়ে ইচ্ছার প্রকাশই শক্তির ক্ষুরণ। শিব অনাদিসিদ্ধ শক্তির যোগে ধর্ম্মা এবং ধর্ম্মরূপে নিত্য প্রকাশিত। বিমর্শ, চিত্তি, চৈতন্য, আত্মা, স্বরসোদিতা, পরাবাক্য, স্বাতন্ত্র্য, মহামায়া, ঐশ্বর্য্য, সত্তা, ক্ষুরতা, সার, মালিনী, মাতৃকা, হৃদয়মূর্ত্তি, সংবিৎ, কর্তৃত্ব, স্পন্দ প্রভৃতি শব্দ শক্তিরই বাচক।

যদিও নিখিল বিশ্বই পরম-শিবের শক্তি, তথাপি জ্ঞান, ইচ্ছা ও ক্রিয়া—এই তিন-রূপেই তাঁহার সমধিক প্রকাশ। মার্কণ্ডেয়-চণ্ডী পাঠ করিতে পাঠকগণ মহাসরস্বতীরূপে ঐয়াকে স্মরণ করেন, তিনি জ্ঞানশক্তি, মহাকালীরূপে ঐয়াকে স্মরণ করেন, তিনি ইচ্ছাশক্তি, এবং মহালক্ষ্মীরূপে ঐয়াকে স্মরণ করেন, তিনি ক্রিয়াশক্তি। এই তিনের মধ্যে কোনরূপ ভেদ নাই।

সকল বস্তুতেই শক্তির অধিষ্ঠান রহিয়াছে। ‘আমার ইহা করিবার শক্তি আছে, অথবা শক্তি নাই’—শক্তি আছে, অথবা শক্তি নাই’ এইপ্রকার উক্তি জীবনিষ্ঠ শক্তিরই অনুভূতি হইয়া থাকে।

ভাস্কর রায় তাঁহার সৌভাগ্যভাস্করে (ললিতাসহস্রনামভাষ্য) দেবী-ভাগবতের একটি বচন উদ্ধৃত করিয়া বলিয়াছেন, জগতে সকলই শক্তিমান, এবং শক্তির উপাসক। ‘নরাধমকে’ লোকে শক্তিহীন বলিয়া থাকে, রুদ্রহীন বা বিষ্ণুহীন বলে না।

প্রত্যেক বস্তুতেই আপন আপন প্রয়োজনসাধিকা শক্তিরূপে শক্তির এবং বস্তুরূপে শিবের অধিষ্ঠান স্বীকার করা হইয়াছে।

বেদান্তদর্শনের মায়া আর তত্ত্বের শক্তি এক পদার্থ নহে। মায়া জড়পদার্থ, আর এই মহামায়া নিত্যচৈতন্যরূপিণী। সংসারে বন্ধনের বেলা ইনিই মায়া রূপে জীবকে বন্ধন করেন, মোচনের বেলা ইনিই মহামায়া অর্থাৎ শিবরূপে জীবকে মুক্ত করেন।

শক্তিই শিবের দেহ। উভয়ের মধ্যে অঙ্গাঙ্গীভাব-সম্বন্ধের কল্পনা করা হইয়াছে। শঙ্করাচার্য্য আনন্দলহরীতে শক্তির স্বরূপ বর্ণনা প্রসঙ্গে বলিয়াছেন—‘মাতঃ ভগবতি, তুমিই শিবের দেহ। তোমার স্তনযুগল স্বর্য্য এবং চন্দ্র। তোমার স্বরূপ শিবেরই স্বরূপ। তোমাদের মধ্যে পরস্পর, অঙ্গাঙ্গীভাব রহিয়াছে। পরন্তু অঙ্গ ও অঙ্গী নির্ণয় করা যায় না। উভয়ের এই সমরস-পয়মানন্দ-সম্বন্ধই শুধু দেখিতেছি।’

এই বিশ্বপ্রপঞ্চ শিব ও শক্তির মিলনের পরিণাম। শক্তিবিরহিত শিবকেই নিগুণ বলা হয়। নিগুণ শিব কৰ্ত্তৃত্বাদি-ধৰ্ম্মশূন্য। শিব ও শক্তির মধ্যে ভেদকল্পনারও সার্থকতা আছে। শিব প্রকাশস্বরূপ অথও, পূর্ণস্বভাব। তথাপি তিনি বিশেষ বিশেষ শক্তির যোগে সগুণরূপে সাধকের ধ্যানের বিষয়ীভূত হইয়া থাকেন। শক্তিবিশয়ক জ্ঞানের মধ্যস্থতায় সাধককে শিব-বিশয়ক জ্ঞান লাভ করিতে হয়। সুতরাং শক্তিই হইতেছেন—জীববিশয়ক জ্ঞানের উপায় স্বরূপ। ভুবনাদি অনন্তরূপে এই শক্তিই স্মুরিত হইতেছেন। আপাত-বুদ্ধিতে যে-বস্তুকে জড় বলিয়া জানিতেছি, যে-বস্তুকে চেতন বলিয়া মনে করিতেছি, সব-কিছুই চৈতন্যরূপিনী শক্তির স্মুরণ। জাগ্রৎ, স্বপ্ন, সুষুপ্তি প্রভৃতি সকল অবস্থাই শক্তির প্রকাশভেদ মাত্র।

শিবের স্বাতন্ত্র্যের প্রকাশ বলিয়াই সমগ্র বিশ্ব শক্তিস্বরূপ। শক্তি হইতেছেন—শিবের বিভূতি।

শক্তির স্মুরণ ও উপাসনা সম্বন্ধে জানা যায় যে, সকল সাধকই স্ব-স্ব উপাস্ত্র দেব-তাকে শিব হইতে অভিন্ন বলিয়া জানিবেন। সুতরাং শক্তির সহিতও উপাস্ত্রের অভেদ চিন্তা করিতে হইবে।

নিখিল বিশ্ব বা স্বাতন্ত্র্যশক্তি শিবে প্রতিবিম্বিত হইতেছে। অর্থাৎ সব-কিছুই শিবসত্তায় নিমগ্ন। এই কারণে শিব-শক্তির সম্বন্ধবিচারকে ‘স্পন্দবাদ’ এবং ‘আভাসবাদ’ বলা হয়। শিবের স্বাতন্ত্র্যবলে বিশ্ব শিবে প্রতিবিম্বিত হইয়া থাকে। অপর কোনকিছুর সহায়তার প্রয়োজন হয় না। শিবের স্বাতন্ত্র্যশক্তিকে ‘পর্য্যাপ্তি’ও বলা হয়।

এই বৈচিত্র্যপূর্ণ বিশ্ব যাহাতে উদিত ও অন্তমিত হয়, তাঁহাকে তাস্ত্রিক পরিভাষায় ‘কুল’ বলে। কুলও শক্তিরই স্মুরণবিশেষ। কুল-ব্যতিরেকেও যাহার সত্তা রহিয়াছে, তিনিই ‘অকুল’, অর্থাৎ শিব। শিব স্বাতন্ত্র্যবশে লীলাচ্ছলে বিশ্বকে প্রকাশিত করিবার নিমিত্ত আপনাতে শিবশক্তিরূপতা প্রকটিত করেন।

শিবশক্তির সম্মিলিত রূপকে তন্ত্রশাস্ত্রে ‘যামল’ বলা হইয়াছে। ‘যামল’ শব্দের ব্যুৎপত্তিগত অর্থ হইতেছে ‘যুগল’ (যমল + যু)।

শিবের সৃষ্টি-প্রভৃতিবিষয়িনী আকাঙ্ক্ষার অপর সংজ্ঞা ইচ্ছাশক্তি। ইচ্ছাশক্তির ইহাই ঐশ্বর্য্য বা চরম বিকাশ। প্রস্মুরিত শক্তিসমূহের পরস্পরের ভেদ স্পষ্টরূপে লক্ষ্য করা যায় না।

ইচ্ছাশক্তির প্রাক্কোভের পূর্বে যে জ্ঞান আশ্রয়ত থাকে, তাহারই সংজ্ঞা হইতেছে—জ্ঞানশক্তি। জ্ঞাতব্য বা উপভোগ্য বিশ্বের উন্মেষ বা প্রাথমিক পরিস্পন্দই জ্ঞানশক্তির বিষয়। শুভ এবং অশুভ, এই দ্বিবিধ কৰ্ম্মের ফলে আসক্তি জন্মাইয়া যে-সকল জ্ঞান মুক্তির বাধা সৃষ্টি করে, সেইগুলিকে ‘ঘোর’-সংজ্ঞায় অভিহিত করা হইয়াছে। জ্ঞেয় বস্তুর অল্পত্বে জ্ঞানশক্তি সঙ্কুচিত হয় এবং আধিক্যে প্রসারিত হইয়া থাকে। শিবের

ইচ্ছাশক্তির প্রভাবে ইচ্ছমাণ বস্তুগুলি স্ফুরিত হয়, আর জ্ঞানশক্তিতে সেই বস্তুগুলিরই অভিব্যক্তি ঘটে।

যে শক্তিতে জ্ঞায়মান বস্তুগুলি স্ফুরিত হয়—তাহারই সংজ্ঞা ক্রিয়াশক্তি। শক্তি এক হইলেও জ্ঞেয় এবং কার্য্যবস্তুর বিভিন্নতাবশতঃ তাহার অনন্তভেদ কল্পিত হইয়াছে। তিনি শিব হইতে অভিন্ন পরম্বত্ত শিবনিষ্ঠ ধর্ম্মরূপা এবং শিবের সহিত মিলিতরূপে যাবতীয় কর্তৃত্বের সম্পাদিকা। এইভাবে ব্যবহারিক প্রয়োজনে শিবের সহিত তাহার ঈশ্বর ভেদ কল্পনা করা হয়।

উপাসনার প্রয়োজনেও শক্তিকল্পনা অপরিহার্য্য। নিষ্ঠুর শিব উপাস্ত হইতে পারেন না। উপাস্ত দেবতার নাম, গুণ প্রভৃতির স্মরণ-মননাদি উপাসনার অঙ্গ। উপাসনা-মাত্রই সগুণ শিব-বিষয়ক মানস ব্যাপারবিশেষ। শক্তিবিরহিত শিব রূপ ও গুণের অতীত। তদ্বিষয়ে বাক্য ও মনের কোন ব্যাপারও সম্ভবপর নহে।

নাম ও গুণের সহিত শিবের যে-রূপ তাহারই ইচ্ছায় স্ফুরিত হইতেছে, সেই রূপকেও বলা হয়—শক্তি। বিষ্ণু, শিব, শক্তি, গণেশ ও সূর্য্য—এই পঞ্চ দেবতাও শক্তি শব্দের বাচ্য। সগুণ বা সশক্তিক উপাসনার দ্বারা বিশুদ্ধীভূত চিত্তে নিষ্ঠুর শিববিষয়ক জ্ঞান উৎপন্ন হইতে পারে। সাধনার চরম অবস্থায় নিষ্ঠুর শিব শুধু জ্ঞেয় হইয়া থাকেন। তখন বিশ্বস্বরূপ শক্তি তাহার কুক্ষিগত থাকেন বলিয়া শক্তির পৃথক্ সত্তা সাধকের উপলব্ধিগোচর হয় না। শক্তির কার্য্য বিশ্বের স্ফুরণ, আর শিবের কার্য্য প্রকাশ। অতঃ তাহারাই স্ফুরণ-প্রকাশস্বরূপ।

শক্তিতত্ত্বের পরে যে চৌত্রিশটি তত্ত্বের আলোচনা করা হইবে, সেইগুলিও বাস্তবিক পক্ষে শক্তিতত্ত্বেরই অন্তর্গত। শুধু সাধকের বুদ্ধিবিকাশের নিমিত্ত শাস্ত্রে উপদিষ্ট হইয়াছে। বস্তুতঃ শক্তি ও শক্তিমান্ ব্যতীত আর কোন তত্ত্ব নাই।

৩. সদাশিব—শক্তি যখন বিশ্বকে আপনা-হইতে অভিন্ন বলিয়া মনে করেন, তখন তাহারই সংজ্ঞা হয়—সদাশিব।

৪. ঈশ্বর—যে শক্তি বিশ্বকে আপনা হইতে ভিন্নরূপে উপলব্ধি করেন, তিনিই ঈশ্বর। ব্রহ্মা, বিষ্ণু ও রুদ্ররূপ শক্তিও ঈশ্বরতত্ত্বের অন্তর্গত। ‘আমি বিশ্ব হইতে ভিন্ন’—শক্তির এইপ্রকার উপলব্ধি না ঘটিলে সৃষ্টি, পালন ও সংহার সম্ভবপর হয় না।

৫. বিদ্যা—অহন্তা ও ইদন্তার অভেদ জ্ঞান, অর্থাৎ ‘আমিই এই বিশ্ব’ সদাশিবের এইপ্রকার জ্ঞানের নামই বিদ্যা। এই বিদ্যাকে শুদ্ধ বিদ্যা, এবং ব্রহ্মবিদ্যাও বলা হইয়াছে।

৬. মায়া—‘এই বিশ্ব আমি হইতে ভিন্ন’—ঈশ্বরের এইপ্রকার উপলব্ধির নাম—মায়া।

৭. অবিদ্যা—উল্লিখিত বিদ্যাতত্ত্বের আবরক তত্ত্বকেই অবিদ্যা-সংজ্ঞায় অভিহিত করা হইয়াছে। ইহা দ্বারা জীবের শিবভাব ও সর্ব্বজ্ঞতা আবৃত থাকে।

৮. কলা—শিবের সর্বময় ব্যাপক শক্তি সঙ্কুচিত হইয়া যখন জীবে অবস্থান করে, তখন সেই শক্তিকেই কলা বলা হয়।

৯. রাগ—বৈষয়িক তৃপ্তি অপূর্ণ থাকিলেই বিষয়ের প্রতি আসক্তি জন্মে। শিব নিত্যতৃপ্ত। কোন কালে কোন বিষয়ে তাঁহার কোনরূপ আসক্তি নাই। শিবের নিত্য-তৃপ্তি সঙ্কুচিত হইয়া অপূর্ণ জীবে আশ্রয় লাভ করে। জীবের তৃপ্তি অসম্পূর্ণ। ভোগ্য বিষয়ের প্রতি আসক্তি জীবের চিরন্তন। শিবের এই সঙ্কুচিত তৃপ্ততাকেই রাগ-তত্ত্ব বলা হইয়াছে।

১০. কাল—সকল অনিত্য বস্তুকে কলন অর্থাৎ ধ্বংস করে বলিয়া শিবের সঙ্কুচিত নিত্যতাকে কাল-সংজ্ঞায় অভিহিত করা হয়। প্রতিমুহূর্ত্তে অনিত্য বস্তু সমূহের পরিণাম ঘটিতেছে। অস্তি, জায়তে, বর্দ্ধতে, বিপরিণমতে, অপক্ষীয়তে এবং বিনশতি এই ছয়টি অবস্থা যথাক্রমে অবস্থান, উৎপত্তি, বৃদ্ধি, অবস্থান্তরপ্রাপ্তি, ক্ষয় এবং ধ্বংস। এই ষড়-ভাব বিকার-বশে শিবের নিত্যতাশক্তির সঙ্কেচ কল্পনা করা হয়। দণ্ড, পল, ঘটিকা হইতে যুগ, কল্প, মন্বন্তর প্রভৃতি সকল সংজ্ঞা বা বিভাগই কালনিক-মাত্র।

১১. নিয়তি—নিয়তি শব্দের অর্থ নিয়ম। শিব স্বতন্ত্র তত্ত্ব। তাঁহার স্বাতন্ত্র্য অবিচার্য্য প্রতিফলনে সঙ্কুচিত হইয়া থাকে। সঙ্কুচিত বা পরিমিত স্বাতন্ত্র্যই নিয়তিতত্ত্ব। ইহাকেই অদৃষ্ট বা ভাগ্য বলা হয়।

১২. জীব—জীব হইতেছেন শিবের অংশ। জীবকে অণু এবং পুরুষ বলা হয়। শিবের জীবভাবই শরীরধারণ ও মৃত্যুর কারণ। অবিদ্যা, কলা, রাগ, কাল ও নিয়তি জীবে আশ্রিত। অগ্নিশূলিঙ্গ যেরূপ অগ্নিরই অংশ, সেইরূপ জীবও শিবেরই অংশমাত্র। শরীর জীবের আবরণ বা কঙ্ক।

১৩. প্রকৃতি—প্রকৃতি শব্দ চিন্তের নামান্তর। সত্ত্ব, রজঃ ও তমঃ, এই তিনটি গুণের সাম্যাবস্থার নাম প্রকৃতি। এই গুণত্রয়, এবং বুদ্ধি-তত্ত্ব প্রভৃতি বক্ষ্যমাণ তত্ত্বগুলি অনতিব্যক্ত স্বল্পরূপে প্রকৃতিতে অবস্থান করে। এই কারণে প্রকৃতিকে অব্যক্তও বলা হয়।

১৪. মনঃ—প্রকৃতিতে রজোগুণের প্রাধান্য ঘটিলে তাহারই সংজ্ঞা হয়—মন। মন হইতে সর্ববিধ সঙ্কল্পের উদ্ভব।

১৫. বুদ্ধি—সত্ত্বগুণপ্রধান অন্তঃকরণের নাম বুদ্ধি। বুদ্ধি হইতে সর্ববিধ নিশ্চয়ান্বক জ্ঞান উৎপন্ন হইয়া থাকে।

১৬. অহঙ্কার—তমোগুণপ্রধান প্রকৃতির নাম অহঙ্কার। ‘আমি, আমার’ ইত্যাদি অল্পভব অহঙ্কার হইতে উৎপন্ন হয়। এইপ্রকার অল্পভবকে ভেদজ্ঞান বা বিকল্প-জ্ঞান বলা হইয়াছে।

১৭—২১. শ্রোত্র হইতে ঘ্রাণ পর্যন্ত যে পাঁচটি তত্ত্বের নাম করা হইয়াছে,

ইহাদিগকে জ্ঞানেন্দ্রিয় বলে। শব্দগ্রাহক ইন্দ্রিয়ের নাম শ্রোত্র। এইরূপে অণ্ডুলিকেও জানিতে হইবে।

২২-২৬. বাক্ হইতে উপস্থ পৰ্য্যন্ত উল্লিখিত পাঁচটি তত্ত্বকে কৰ্ম্মেন্দ্রিয় বলা হয়। এই ইন্দ্রিয়গুলিও এক-একটি কৰ্ম্মের সাধন।

২৭-৩১. শব্দ-স্পর্শাদি যে পাঁচটি তত্ত্বের নাম উল্লেখ করা হইয়াছে, এইগুলিকে পঞ্চ তত্ত্ব, সূক্ষ্ম ভূত বা বিষয় বলা হয়।

৩২-৩৬. আকাশ হইতে পৃথ্বীতত্ত্ব পৰ্য্যন্ত উল্লিখিত পাঁচটি তত্ত্বকে পঞ্চ মহাভূত বলে। আকাশতত্ত্ব অবকাশ বা ফাঁক। বায়ুতত্ত্ব গতিবিশিষ্ট এবং জীবনীশক্তির উৎস। তেজ-তত্ত্ব দাহিকা ও পাটিকা শক্তিবিশিষ্ট। জলতত্ত্ব দ্রবত্ববিশিষ্ট। পৃথ্বীতত্ত্ব কাঠিত্ববিশিষ্ট এবং আধারশক্তির আশ্রয়। মনস্তত্ত্ব হইতে আরম্ভ করিয়া অনুলোমক্রমে পৃথ্বীতত্ত্ব পৰ্য্যন্ত তেইশটি তত্ত্ববিষয়ে তত্ত্বশাস্ত্রে ত্রায়বৈশেষিকাদি দর্শনের মত কোন বিচার দেখা যায় না।

কোন কোন তত্ত্বগ্রন্থে আলোচিত ছত্রিশটি তত্ত্বকে তিনটি তত্ত্বের অন্তর্ভুক্ত করা হইয়াছে। সেই তিনটি তত্ত্ব হইতেছে—আগ্ন্যতত্ত্ব, বিদ্যাতত্ত্ব এবং শিবতত্ত্ব। যে-সকল তত্ত্ব শিবের জীবতাবের কারণ এবং জীবের ভোগ্য বিষয়, সেইগুলির সংজ্ঞা—আগ্ন্যতত্ত্ব। প্রতিলোমক্রমে পৃথ্বীতত্ত্ব হইতে মায়াতত্ত্ব পৰ্য্যন্ত একত্রিশটি তত্ত্বই সচ্চিদানন্দ শিবের ‘সৎ’-স্বভাব প্রকটিত, কিন্তু চিৎ ও আনন্দ-স্বভাব আবৃত। এইহেতু এই একত্রিশটি তত্ত্ব আগ্ন্যতত্ত্বের অন্তর্গত। শুদ্ধবিদ্যা, ঈশ্বর ও সদাশিব এই তিনটি তত্ত্ব সৎ ও চিৎস্বভাব প্রকটিত, কিন্তু আনন্দস্বভাব আবৃত। এইকারণে এই তিনটি তত্ত্ব বিদ্যাতত্ত্বের অন্তর্গত শক্তি ও শিব এই দুই অন্তর্গত তত্ত্ব সৎ, চিৎ এবং আনন্দ, এই তিনটি স্বভাবই প্রকটিত বলিয়া এই দুইটি তত্ত্ব শিবতত্ত্বের অন্তর্গত।

তাত্ত্বিক উপাসনার প্রথমের আগ্ন্যতত্ত্ব, বিদ্যাতত্ত্ব ও শিবতত্ত্বকে স্মরণ করিয়া উপাসকগণ ‘স্বাহান্ত’-মন্ত্রে আচমন করিয়া থাকেন। যথাক্রমে স্থূল দেহ, সূক্ষ্ম দেহ ও কারণ দেহকে মন্ত্রদ্বারা শোধন করাই এই মন্ত্রাচমনের উদ্দেশ্য।

তত্ত্বশাস্ত্রে পরিণামবাদ স্বীকৃত হইয়াছে। শিবশক্তির লীলাচ্ছলে শক্তির পরিণামে বিশ্বব্রহ্মাণ্ডের স্রুণ হইতেছে। মাণ্ডুসার তত্ত্বজাল নির্মাণের মত সৃষ্টিপ্রকাশের বেলা শিবশক্তি নিমিত্ত এবং উপাদান কারণ হইয়া থাকেন। শক্তিবিরহিত নিগুণ শিবের স্পন্দনেরও সামর্থ্য নাই। শিব ও শক্তি অভিন্নরূপে পরস্পরের মধ্যে অনুস্থিত। তাত্ত্বিক পরিভাষায় ইহাকে ‘সমরস’ অবস্থা বলা হয়। অন্যান্য এবং অনতিরিক্ত রস বা আনন্দ যাঁহাদের আছে, তাঁহারা ‘সমরস’। শিবশক্তির গাঢ় সংশ্লেষ বা মিলনের সংজ্ঞা ‘সামরস্য’। সামরস্য-সম্বন্ধে শক্তিবিশিষ্ট শিবই জীবের মুক্তিদাতা।

বস্তুতঃ শিব ও শক্তির পৃথক্ সত্তা না থাকিলেও শিব শক্তির অধিষ্ঠান। শিবের সৃষ্টি, স্থিতি ও সংহাৰ-কার্য্যে শক্তি হইতেছেন সঙ্গত্ব নির্বাহিকা। শক্তি সদ্ৰূপা ও

আনন্দরূপিণী। এইহেতু তান্ত্রিকের দৃষ্টিতে শিব আনন্দময়, কোথাও দুঃখের লেশমাত্র নাই। জীবের দুঃখানুভূতি এবং প্রকার ভ্রমজ্ঞান।

শক্তি নির্বাহী বিশ্বপ্রপঞ্চ শিবকৃষ্টিতে নিয়ত অন্তর্হিত। নিখিল বিশ্বের খণ্ডপ্রলয়ের (দ্বশাস্ত্র মহাপ্রলয় স্বীকার করেন না।) সময় বিনষ্ট জীবগণের নিয়তি বৈকর্য্যফলকে স্বল্পরূপে আপনার মধ্যে সংহত করিয়া একমাত্র শিবই বিরাজ করেন। শক্তিও তখন অব্যক্তভাবে শিবে আশ্রয় গ্রহণ করেন। প্রলয়ের নির্দিষ্ট কাল অতীত হইলে জীবগণের নিয়তির বৈচিত্র্য অহুসারে পুনরায় অব্যক্ত। শক্তিই সৃষ্টিবিস্ময়ী ইচ্ছারূপে শিবে প্রকাশিত হন। অতঃপর অচিরবিভূতি এই শক্তি ক্রমশঃ বিশ্বরূপে সুরিত হইয়া থাকেন।

তন্ময়ের দৃষ্টিতে দৃশ্যমান বিশ্ব শিবশক্তির বিচিত্র লীলার রঙ্গমঞ্চ। অভিনেতা যেক্রপ রাম-সীতাদির ভূমিকায় অভিনয় করিলেও আপনাকে যথার্থই রাম বা সীতা বলিয়া মনে করেন না, পরন্তু রামাদির স্বরূপে তিনি নির্লিপ্তই থাকেন, শিবশক্তিও সেইরূপ লীলাচ্ছলে বিশ্বে লিপ্ত হন না। তাঁহার নিকট তাঁহার লীলা স্বরূপতঃ সত্য না হইলেও সাংসারিক সাধারণ জীবের নিকট অবশ্যই সত্য। সাধনায় জীবমুক্ত হইলে সাধক এই সংসারকে লীলা বলিয়া মনে করিতে পারেন। অধিকারিতেদে গ্রহণযোগ্য দ্বৈতবাদ এবং অদ্বৈতবাদ উভয়ই তন্ময়ে স্থান পাইয়াছে। যতকাল পর্য্যন্ত শিবের সহিত জীবের উপাস্ত-উপাসকতাব লোপ পাইবে না, ততকাল পর্য্যন্ত বিশ্বকে অসত্য বলিবার উপায় নাই। ‘নিখিল বিশ্বই শিবশক্তি-স্বরূপ’ এইপ্রকার উপলব্ধি ঘটিলে দ্বৈততাব তিরোহিত হয়। দেবাস্তরের অদ্বৈতবাদের সহিত তন্ময়ের অদ্বৈতবাদের অনেকাংশে মিল রহিয়াছে। শিব সর্ব্বতোভাবে স্বাধীন। তিনি স্বেচ্ছায় তাঁহার শক্তিদ্বারা স্বাতন্ত্র্যকে আচ্ছাদন করেন। তখন অপ্রকাশ-স্বাতন্ত্র্য বা অস্বতন্ত্র শিবই জীবরূপে লীলা করেন। শিব ও জীবের মধ্যে বাস্তব ভেদ নাই। কল্পিত ভেদ ঔপাধিক-মাত্র। শরীরাত্মক উপাধির দ্বারা উপহিত শিবই জীব, আর শরীরোপাধিবিরহিত জীবই শিব। এই তাৎপর্য্যেই জীবকে শিবের অংশ বলা হয়।

জীব-রূপ ধারণ করিলে শিব আপনাকে জীব হইতে পৃথক বলিয়া অভিমান করেন। এই অভিমানও শক্তিরই লীলা।

সায়ংকালের প্রভাবে আরক্ত সূর্য্য যেক্রপ শিবের রশ্মিকে সংহত করিয়া অস্তাচলে গমন করেন, সেইরূপ মায়াশক্তির লীলায় শিবের অপ্রকাশ-সামর্থ্য সঙ্কুচিত হইলে শিবই শরীরকঙ্কুকিত জীবরূপ প্রাপ্ত হন।

জীব তিনপ্রকার শুদ্ধ, অশুদ্ধ ও মিশ্র। শিব, শক্তি এবং সদাশিব কখনও অজ্ঞানের আশ্রয় হন না বলিয়া শুদ্ধ জীব। অজ্ঞানের আশ্রয় বলিয়া সাধারণতঃ মনুষ্যাদি সকল জীবই অশুদ্ধ জীব। বশিষ্ঠাদি মুনিঋষিগণ সময়বিশেষে অজ্ঞানবিরহিত এবং সময় বিশেষে অজ্ঞানাবৃত বলিয়া মিশ্র জীব।

উপসংহারে মুক্তিসম্বন্ধে তত্ত্বের দুই-চারিটি সিদ্ধান্তের বিষয় বলিতেছি। সকল সাধনারই চরম লক্ষ্য হইতেছে মুক্তি। মুক্তি সকলের অন্তিম লক্ষ্য বলিয়া ইহা এক পরম পুরুষার্থ বলিয়া যায়।

সমুদ্র-কুপায় এবং শাস্ত্র-শ্রবণের ফলে শিব-বিষয়ে পুরোহিত জ্ঞান লাভ হইতে পারে কিন্তু অনুরাগ অহুভূতির নিমিত্ত সাধনার প্রয়োজন। শিববিষয়ক অপরোক্ষ অহুভূতি জীবের মুক্তি বাস্তব দৃষ্টিতে শিব ও জীব অভিন্ন। শুধু জীব কেন, শক্তি অর্থাৎ বিশ্বের সহিত শিবের ভেদ আছে এইপ্রকার অহুভূতি অবিজ্ঞাপ্রসূত। সাধনার দ্বারা এই অবিজ্ঞাকে বিনাশ করিতে হয়।

গুরুপদার্থ সাধনমার্গে চলিতে চলিতে সাধক শিব-শক্তির অভেদ উপলব্ধি করিয়া থাকেন। এই উপলব্ধিই জীবের মুক্তি।

গুরুর কৃপা, শাস্ত্রাধ্যয়ন এবং শাস্ত্রবিহিত কর্মের অহুষ্ঠানে চিত্তের মলিনতা অপসৃত হয়। নির্মূলচিত্ত জীবের সংসারাসক্তি কিঞ্চিৎ শিথিল হইয়া থাকে। এই অবস্থায় সাধক ভক্তিবোগ অবলম্বনের যোগ্যতা লাভ করেন। ভাগবতশ্রেণে ভগবদ্ভ্যাস-শ্রবণে তাঁহার অতিক্রম হইয়া থাকে।

সমুদ্র শিবের পূজা, জপ, নামকীর্তন প্রভৃতি গোপী ভক্তি। গোপী ভক্তির দ্বারা সাধনার ফলে যে অনুরাগবিশেষের উদ্ভব হয়, তাহার নাম পরা ভক্তি। এইপ্রকার ভক্তিও সমুদ্র শিবকে অবলম্বন করিয়াই উৎপন্ন হইয়া থাকে। সমুদ্র শিব তখন সাধকের অনুরাগ চরিতার্থ করিবার নিমিত্ত শিব, বিষ্ণু, কালী প্রভৃতি নানা রূপের অহুতম রূপের প্রতি সাধককে আকর্ষণ করেন।

সেইসকল মুক্তির ভক্তিসাধন উপাসনা প্রণালী শাস্ত্রে উপদিষ্ট হইয়াছে। এইপ্রকার উপাসনার ফলে চিত্ত বিশুদ্ধতর হয় এবং ভগবান্ কৃপা করিয়া থাকেন। তাঁহাকে আশ্রয় করিলে তিনি প্রসন্ন হইয়া চিত্তের মায়াবরণ ছিন্ন করিয়া দেন। অনাদি কাল হইতে জীব আপনার শিবত্ব ভুলিয়া অগুহ লাভ করিয়াছেন। সাধনার ফলে এবং ভগবৎপ্রসাদে তাঁহার অবিজ্ঞার বন্ধন ছিন্ন হইলে তিনি “আমিই শিব” এইপ্রকার পরম জ্ঞান লাভ করেন। তখন বিভূত্ব, সর্বজ্ঞত্ব প্রভৃতি ধর্ম ও তাঁহাতে প্রকাশ পাইয়া থাকে। এই অবস্থায় সিদ্ধ পুরুষকে জীবমুক্ত বলা যায়। দেহত্যাগের পর তাঁহার আর পুনর্জন্ম হয় না। উপাসনা এবং তীব্র ভক্তিসম্বলিত শরণাগতি ব্যতীত ভগবদহুগ্রহ লাভ করা যায় না। তীব্র ভক্তিই তাঁহার উপাসনাই পরম্পরা-সম্বন্ধে মুক্তির প্রযোজক। উপাসনার ফলে জীব নিজের স্বরূপ জানিতে পারেন। এই স্বরূপাবগতি বা স্ববিমর্শই তত্ত্বমতে চরম পুরুষার্থ বা মুক্তি।

মুক্তিপ্রধান তত্ত্ব-প্রভৃতি দর্শনে দার্শনিক সূক্ষ্ম বিচারের যেকোন পরিপাটি দেখা যায়, তত্ত্বের তত্ত্ব বা পার্থক্যসকলনে সেইরূপ সূক্ষ্ম বিচার পাওয়া যায় না। নিবন্ধকার

আচার্য্যদের মধ্যে ভাস্কর রায়ের বিচারই সম্ভবতঃ সমধিক বিশ্লেষণমূলক। আনুষ্ঠানিক সাধনপ্রণালীর উপদেশের ক্ষেত্রে প্রসঙ্গতঃ দার্শনিক বিচার উপস্থিত হওয়ায় মনীষিগণ এই তত্ত্ববিচারকে দার্শনিক-বিচার বলিয়াই অভিহিত করিয়াছেন। পণ্ডিতপ্রবর যিনি তর্করত্ন মহাশয় তত্ত্ববিচারকে মূলক্ষেত্রে অবলম্বন করিয়া ব্রহ্মতত্ত্বের শক্তিভাষ্য রচনা করিয়াছেন।

